

**IOWA BIRD LIFE**  
**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Brown Booby at Red Rock Reservoir

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

On 3 September 2015 I was birding from the high water boat ramp at the east end of the Whitebreast Recreation Area at Red Rock Reservoir in Marion County. At approximately 8:40 A.M. I spotted a distant, dark-colored bird resting on the water in the middle of the lake. My first thought was that it was a cormorant, but almost immediately I recognized it as a sulid. The bird quickly took flight and flew west, disappearing from view. I drove west to Whitebreast Point where I relocated the bird, now flying east. Over the next 2 hours I saw the bird briefly (and at great distance) from Whitebreast and later from the marina and concluded that it was an adult Brown Booby (Front Cover and Figure 1). At 11 A.M. Kevin Murphy joined me and we relocated the bird by boat off the marina; we photographed it at close range and it was in this same general area when we departed a little after noon.



*Figure 1. Brown Booby at Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 3 September 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

The torpedo-shaped body and long, narrow wings were characteristic of a sulid. On the water, it was a rather large, dark-colored bird, reminiscent of a cormorant, but with a long, pointed tail that was held out of the water, a thicker body, a shorter and thicker neck, and a larger bill. At a distance the bill appeared quite yellow, but at close range it was more flesh-colored with a bright yellow base and gray skin forward of the eye. The bill was approximately two times the length of the head and was evenly tapered to a pointed tip. The head, neck, mantle, breast, upperwings, and tail were dark brown, although the head was noticeably darker than the rest of the upperparts. There was a sharp line of demarcation between the dark brown breast and the white belly and vent. The underwings were dark brown with white axillars and median coverts. The feet and legs were dull yellow. The brown tail was wedge-shaped with elongated central rectrices. At rest on the water, the tail extended well beyond the tips of the folded wings. The flight was low and direct with rapid shallow wingbeats. It would rise and glide prior to each plunge dive, which usually intersected with the water and an approximately 45-degree angle. On the basis of plumage and facial pattern I aged the bird as an adult. Sex was more problematic, but on the basis of the yellow facial skin and small gray region in front of the eye it was a female. The bird further appeared to be in worn alternate plumage, and many of the rectrices were broken. Correspondence with seabird expert Peter Pyle confirmed that it was a female, at least 3 years old, and of the Atlantic subspecies *leucogaster* (Peter Pyle, pers. comm.).

The Brown Booby was seen by many birders the afternoon and evening of 3 September, but could not be relocated on later dates. This is the first record of a Brown Booby for Iowa, and one of few in North America to stray so far from a coast. An adult Brown Booby at Hanson L, Sarpy County, Nebraska on 28 June-1 July 2014 (Brogie, M.A. 2015. Report of the NOU Records Committee. *Nebraska Bird Review* 83:125-138) was also far inland. There has been a rapid increase in interior records of this species in the last few years, especially in the Lower Mississippi River Valley (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) and along the Atlantic Coast. I suspect this will not be the last record for Iowa.

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# Field Reports—Fall 2015

*Paul Hertz*



*Paul Hertz*

## WEATHER

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2015 was the Earth's warmest year on record. In the Lower 48 states, it was the 2nd warmest year, 0.9 degrees Fahrenheit behind 2012. Narrowing the focus to Iowa, temperatures did average above normal, but only by 1.1 degrees, ranking 2015 as the 31st warmest in 143 years of record-keeping. But the fall season taken by itself was closer to the national picture, compiling an average 4.2 degrees above normal, and making it the 6th warmest fall on record.

August was the only one of the four fall months that had an average temperature below the statistical mean. It was generally mild and there were infrequent instances of excessive summer heat. The first half of the month was dry, but considerable rain in the second half made up for it including some instances

of locally very heavy rains.

September, on the other hand, was warmer than usual, in fact, the first seven days of September ranked as the warmest week of the year. The monthly average of 68.4 degrees was nearly the same as the 69.2 degrees average recorded for August, and was 5.2 degrees above the statistical September average, making it the 7th warmest September on record. Yet, the heat was not intense, and no locations reported any temperatures higher than 96 degrees. Rainfall for the month was about normal.

The first half of October was warm, and the second half was cool, combining to make an average that was slightly above normal. The season's first hard freeze occurred on the 16th in Spencer with temperatures the following morning dropping to 19 degrees in Stanley and nearly that in most of the north half of the state. A few days later, however, things warmed up enough to enable fairly heavy rains over much of the state, ending a dry spell that had begun on 30 September.

November was warm, turbulent, and wet, finishing with heavy snow. Temperatures averaged 5.2 degrees above normal, and precipitation was 2.18 inches above normal, making it the 10th warmest and 7th wettest November on record. Nineteen tornadoes on the 11th (Veteran's Day) were 7 more than the previous November high. Summer-like conditions lasted well into the month, but winter arrived abruptly on the 20th when a major

snowstorm blanketed the state with as much as 15 inches at Rock Rapids and 16 inches at Kelsey. It was the most snow so early in the season since 1957. The next day, temperatures dropped to -4 degrees at Spencer and -5 degrees at Waterloo and Stanley. These bitter cold temperatures were a brief anomaly, and conditions improved closer to freezing later in the month, but the snows continued into December.

#### HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

The warm and generally mild conditions extended summer well into the first half of October. Although most species arrived on time, a few were noticeably late. Northern Waterthrush, Wilson's Warbler, Harris's Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow were not found until a week beyond their median arrival dates over the last 10 years. American Pipits were 2 weeks late, and Dunlins could not be coaxed into Iowa until a few days after the first hard freeze in mid-October. Both Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings were very late, delaying until the first and the second weeks of November, whereas their typical arrival dates are in October. A stunning male Vermilion Flycatcher was spotted in Madison County on the very late date of 21 Nov, following the first really heavy snow.

A few other species took advantage of the mild conditions to linger to statistically late dates. A Blue-winged Warbler was found on the record late date of 2 October, a Wilson's Phalarope was record late on 21 October, and a silent flycatcher that could only be identified to the *Empidonax* genus was found on the surprising date of November 28. Second-latest dates were recorded for American Avocet, Red Knot, and Yellow-throated Vireo, and a Least Bittern was 3rd-latest. A few species, not as many, arrived early, including Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed gulls.

For some species that traditionally appear in large groups, numbers continue to be low. The peak for Canvasback along the Mississippi River, which is assessed by aerial survey, remained below 100,000 for the second year in a row. The average peak during the last 10 years is 230,000. The high counts of 25 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 100 Least Sandpipers were also below traditional counts. The largest Snow Goose count of 25,050 was well below what is possible in western Iowa in November, but the mild conditions may have kept much of the population farther north. Similarly, weather patterns may have kept the Swainson's Hawk migration generally west of Iowa. At the Hitchcock hawk watch in the Loess Hills of Pottawattamie County, the season total of 23 was the lowest in their 14-year history. Two other raptor species, however, appear to be in genuine decline. Both Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels posted record low totals at Hitchcock, with both totals punctuating a fairly steady 7-year period of decline. At the Grammer Grove hawkwatch in the central part of the state, the season count of Red-tailed Hawks was the 2nd-lowest in 26 years of records, and the American Kestrel count was 3rd-lowest. Other disappointments at Grammer Grove were zero Red-shouldered Hawks, a record low 21 Cooper's Hawks, and a 2nd-lowest total of 7 Ospreys.

There were several regular species that went unreported. Ruffed Grouse has not been reported in the fall since a single observation in Winneshiek County in 2012. In fact, the species has not been reported at all in the state for 10 consecutive reporting seasons, the last being a summer report from 2013. Also not reported this fall, Little Blue Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and Black-billed Magpie, three species with irregular re-

porting histories. The night-heron was found in spring and also summer, but no one has reported Black-billed Magpies since the summer of 2014. Also, for the first time, Spotted Towhee was not reported, ironically, following a first instance of nesting during the summer (Jungers 2015).

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

There were nine accidental species found in Iowa this fall. Steve Dinsmore found a first record of Brown Booby at Red Rock Reservoir in September; also at Red Rock Reservoir in October was a Parasitic Jaeger found by Tommy Stone; Denny Thompson found a juvenile Black-headed Gull at the Saylorville Reservoir dam; a second state occurrence of Anna's Hummingbird made a brief appearance at Margaret Hutcheson's Des Moines feeder; Jason Darrah found a Lewis's Woodpecker in Guthrie County; Joanne Rice photographed Iowa's 7th Vermilion Flycatcher against a snowy November backdrop; a Clark's Nutcracker was found by Joe Jungers at West Okoboji Lake; the state's 4th record of Townsend's Warbler was confirmed in a Center Lake pine tree by Lee Schoenewe after Wendell Hanson posted on Facebook of the bird preening near a water feature; a very cooperative pair of Pine Grosbeaks were found by Joe Jungers at the Sheldon Cemetery. Also found this fall were three species classified as casual in Iowa. Sharon Bauer photographed a Black-bellied Whistling Duck at Union Slough NWR; Jim Forde found a California Gull at the Red Rock Reservoir dam in September, and a late Red Knot at Hawkeye WA in October.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: A = area, INHS = Illinois Natural History Survey, L = lake, M = marsh, m.ob. = many observers, NA = nature area, NM = National Monument, NWR = national wildlife refuge, P = park, R = river, RA = recreation area, Res = reservoir, SF = state forest, Sl = slough, SP = state park, USNWR = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, WDNR = Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, WPA = waterfowl production area, WA = wildlife area.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** A lone bird was photographed by Sharon Bauer 7 Sep at USNWR *Kossuth*. It stayed through 20 Sep when it was photographed again by Paul Roisen (\*SB, POR).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** A

single was at Bays Branch *Guthrie* 7 Sep (DT). The first migrant flocks were in late October with 130 on 21 Oct at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (JT) and 85 on 25 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (MHB). The peak was 1205 on 13 Nov at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS). One was still at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* on 28 Nov (KVS).

**Snow Goose:** An odd lone bird was found in West Des Moines on 2 Sep, and not seen again (RIC). On 7 Nov, the first migrant flocks were 27 at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB) and 440 at Hitchcock *Pottawattamie* (JT). In the far west, counts increased to a peak of 25,050 on 21 Nov at Hitchcock *Pottawattamie* (JT). This peak count is well under classic fall magnitudes and it can be assumed most birds were still north of Iowa.

**Ross's Goose:** There were three reports of single birds. One was at Jemmer-son Sl *Dickinson* on 17 Oct, 1 was at Ada Hayden P *Story* 14 Nov, and 1 was in rural *Dallas* on 18 Nov (LAS, WO, JB).

**Cackling Goose:** The first 2 were found in Ankeny on 20 Oct (RLC). The high count was 142 on 22 Nov at W Oko-boji L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Trumpeter Swan:** The most was a group of 9 at West Swan L *Emmet* on 7 Nov, consisting of 6 adults and 3 immatures (LAS).

**Tundra Swan:** There were no reports away from the Mississippi R where the high count was 2035 on 20 Nov at Pool 9 *Allamakee* (WDNR).

**Wood Duck:** The most was 390 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 14 Oct (USFWS).

**Gadwall:** Between 8000 and 10,000 were estimated at Pool 13 *Jackson* 11-16 Nov (INHS), which was the most. Peaked at Saylorville *Polk* 1 Nov when as many as 2155 were counted (RLC, AB).

**American Wigeon:** The high count was 2140 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* on 3 Nov (WDNR). About 300 persisted at Pool 13 *Clinton* 4-16 Nov (INHS). Away from the Mississippi R the high count was 27 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 7 Nov (AB).

**American Black Duck:** The first few were found along the Mississippi R *Jackson* 20 Oct by aerial survey (INHS) and 1 on 21 Oct at Amana Lily Pond *Iowa* (JF). The most was 45 at Green Island *Jackson* on 16 Nov (INHS). Also reported in *Allamakee*, *Black Hawk*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Polk*, and *Story*.

**Blue-winged Teal:** High counts were 1520 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 7 Sep (AB) and 1383 at De Soto NWR *Harrison* on 7 Oct (USFWS).

**Northern Shoveler:** Some high counts were 900 at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* on 4 Nov (INHS) and 310 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 7 Nov (AB).

**Northern Pintail:** After a summer with no reports, the first was 1 on 5 Sep at Bays Branch *Guthrie* (DT), followed by 5 on 12 Sep at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB).

Some peak numbers were 1362 on 4 Nov at De Soto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS), 230 on 1 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, RLC), and 1600 on 4 Nov at Pool 13 *Clinton* (INHS).

**Green-winged Teal:** There were two August reports preceding the general arrival in early October. Four were at Fox River WA *Van Buren* on 28 Aug and 10 were at Heron Bend *Lee* on 29 Aug (RLC). In October, the first group was 34 at L Macbride *Johnson* on 4 Oct (MHB). Peaked in the far west with 14165 counted at De Soto NWR *Harrison* on 19 Nov (USFWS). In central Iowa, the high count was 430 on 6 Nov at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DCH).

**Canvasback:** The highest count was 93,180 on 20 Nov at Pool 9 *Allamakee* (WDNR).

**Redhead:** The 456 at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 21 Nov was the most BE has seen at that location. The only higher count was 720 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 23 Nov (INHS).

**Ring-necked Duck:** In central Iowa, peaked at Saylorville Res *Polk* where 420 were counted on 7 Nov (AB). Along the Mississippi, the high count was 8500 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 23 Nov (INHS).

**Greater Scaup:** The first was a group of 9 at Spirit L *Dickinson* on 31 Oct (LAS). The only other location they were found was Saylorville Res *Polk* where from 2-20 were reported 6-28 Nov (JG, RLC, AB).

**Lesser Scaup:** Along the Mississippi, aerial surveys estimated 11,855 at Pool 9 *Allamakee* on 20 Nov and 29,550 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 23 Nov (WDNR, INHS). In central Iowa, the high count was 1855 on 7 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Surf Scoter:** The first was 1 on 13 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), followed by 1 on 14 Oct at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF). There were 4 juveniles on 18 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk*, where at least one continued to be found until 5 Nov (SJD, RLC,



*Ruddy Duck with brood, Trumbull L, Clay, 4 August 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*

AB). Six were counted at Spirit L *Dickinson* on 31 Oct and at least 2 continued through 15 Nov (LAS, MHB). Also, 1 at Alden Gravel Pit *Harden* 13 Nov (MP), the only adult male at Red Rock Res *Marion* 22 Nov (JF), and a juvenile at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 29 Nov (SJD-photo).

**White-winged Scoter:** The first was 1 juvenile at Saylorville Res *Polk* 1-4 Nov (SJD, RLC, JB, AB, JG); 1-2 were found at the same location 23-28 Nov (DT, RLC, AB, MP). The only other report was a juvenile at Little Wall L *Hamilton* on 21 Nov (SJD).

**Black Scoter:** The first was 1 at Marble Beach Spirit L *Dickinson* on 17 Oct (LAS). Four were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 25 Oct (AB, RIA, PHA, MHB), where at least one continued to be found through 11 Nov (AB). One was at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 14 Nov (SJD) and 1 was at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 29 Nov (SJD-photo). All birds were female/immature types.

**Long-tailed Duck:** No reports.

**Bufflehead:** The first was 1 at Ada Hayden P *Story* 13-18 Oct (WO), followed by 25 at Pool 13 *Clinton* 16 Oct (INHS). The peak counts were 2398 at Pool 9 *Al-lamakee* 20 Nov (WDNR) and 2200 at Pool 13 *Clinton* 23 Nov (INHS). In the interior,

the Saylorville Res *Polk* peak of 362 occurred on 21 Nov (AB).

**Common Goldeneye:** The first count was 100 on 11 Nov along the Mississippi R at Lower Pool 13 *Clinton* (INHS), followed by 20 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21 Nov (TMH). The peak was 3430 on 23 Nov at Pool 13 (INHS).

**Hooded Merganser:** The most was 225 on 20 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Common Merganser:** After a couple of individuals spent the summer in Iowa (Dinsmore 2015), another found 30 Sep at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF) is difficult to judge. If it was a migrant, it would be record early by three weeks. The next 2 on 6 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* occurred in the more traditional early window for migrants (JG). But the high count of 97 at De Soto NWR *Harrison* 19 Nov (USFWS) was only a fraction of what's possible in the fall. In the middle of the state, the high count at Saylorville Res *Polk* was 60 on 22 Nov (RLC).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** The first was 1 on 8 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* and was joined by 7 more the following day (RLC). The peak count was 41 on 23 Nov at Saylorville (RLC). The only other location at which they were reported was Spirit L *Dickinson* where 3 were found 15 Nov (MHB).

**Ruddy Duck:** Began gathering in early Oct along the Mississippi R. The 5400 at Pool 13 *Clinton* on 16 Oct grew to a peak count of 7535 on 4 Nov (INHS). In central Iowa, at Saylorville Res *Polk*, as many as 850 were counted on 1 Nov (AB, RLC).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Adults with broods were seen in September in *Jefferson* and *Appanoose* (DCP, MSt). Other reports included 6 on 28 Aug at L *Sugema Van Buren* (RLC) and 11 on 16 Aug in *Page* (KDy). The DNR August Roadside Survey quail index of 1.41 birds/route was the highest since 1994.

**Gray Partridge:** An adult with 15 young was along a gravel road in *Clay* 1 Aug (LAS). Another family group of 10 was found 14 Aug in *Floyd* (CJF). From 1-6 were also reported from *Boone*, *Hardin*, *Story* and *Tama* (DTh, DCH, MP, HZ). Detection of partridge during DNR August Roadside Surveys was up 43% compared to 2014. The statewide index was the highest in 17 years.

**Ruffed Grouse:** No reports.

**Red-throated Loon:** One was at *L Manawa Pottawattamie* 25 Oct (KDy) and another was at *Red Rock Res Marion* 29 Nov (JF).

**Pacific Loon:** There were four individuals reported in Iowa this fall. At *Saylorville Res Polk*, an adult found on 24 Oct was joined by a second bird 25 Oct (AB-photo, MHB), and one or both continued to be seen until 20 Nov (JG, RIA, PHA, RLC, JB, DTh, DCH, WO); one was photographed at *Clear L Cerro Gordo* 26 Oct (CJF); another was at *Spirit L Dickinson* 1 Nov (LAS-details).

**Common Loon:** After a handful spent the summer in Iowa (Dinsmore 2015), the status of two September birds, 1 on 7 Sep at *Hendrickson M Story* (HZ) and 1 on 8 Sep at *Saylorville Polk* (DTh), is difficult to assess. The first likely migrants were 3 at *Red Rock Res Marion* on 14 Oct (JF). Some high counts were 24 on 2 Nov at *Clear L Cerro Gordo* (BLV), 13 on 7 Nov at *Spirit L Dickinson* (LAS), 72 on 13 Nov at *Saylorville Res Polk* (AB), and 15 on 20 Nov at *Coralville Res Johnson* (JF).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** The most was 198 on 29 Sep at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO). Three were still at *Saylorville Res Polk* on 30 Nov (RLC).

**Horned Grebe:** The first ten were at *Saylorville Res Polk* 8 Oct (DTh), where numbers peaked at 25 on 31 Oct (AB). Also reported from *Red Rock Res Marion*, *Gray's*

*L Polk*, *Spirit L Dickinson*, and *Ada Hayden P Story*, and *Clear L Cerro Gordo* (JF, JB, LAS, WO, CJF). The last was 1 on 25 Nov at *Ada Hayden P* (WO).

**Red-necked Grebe:** After breeding occurred at *Trumbull L Clay* (Dinsmore 2015), at least one immature was found there 15 Aug (LAS). Elsewhere, 1 was at *Twelve Mile L Union* on 8 Sep (POR) and a molting adult was at *Red Rock Res Marion* 9-11 Oct (JF, SJD).

**Eared Grebe:** The first three were at *Red Rock Res Marion* 8 Sep (JF). Others were 2 at *Trumbull L Clay* 27 Sep (LAS), 1 each at *Saylorville Res Polk* and *Cedar L Linn* on 1 Nov (AB, JF), 2 at *Spirit L Dickinson* 15 Nov (MHB, LAS), and the last 1 at *Saylorville* 20 Nov (AB).

**Western Grebe:** Eight individuals, including at least one young were found in early August at *Trumbull L Clay* (LAS) following breeding confirmed in July (Dinsmore 2015). Elsewhere, 1 was at *Red Rock Res Marion* 17 Oct (TGS) and another was there 22-29 Nov (JF), up to 3 were at *Spirit L Dickinson* 14-22 Nov (LAS, MHB), and 1 at *Saylorville Res Polk* 24-30 Nov (m.ob).

**BROWN BOOBY:** Iowa's first Brown Booby, an adult female, was found the morning of 3 Sep by Steve Dinsmore at *Red Rock Reservoir Marion* and remained for the rest of the day (\*SJD, \*KM, \*CRE, \*BSc, \*POR, RLC, RIA, PHA; see article this issue). It could not be found by birders who looked the following day.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The most was 2496 migrating south along the *Missouri R* on 6 October in *Pottawattamie* (JT).

**American White Pelican:** Some high counts were 1200 on 30 Aug at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (MHB) and 2280 on 12 Sep at *Saylorville Res Polk* (AB).

**American Bittern:** Reported from



eight counties, all were single birds except 2 at Errington M *Polk* on 25 Sep (RLC). The last two were found 9 Nov at Owego *Woodbury* (GLV) and 13 Nov at Bays Branch *Guthrie* (SJD).

**Least Bittern:** All: 1 on 8 Sep in rural *Ringgold* (POR), 1 on 25 Sep at Sedan *Appanoose* (TNJ), and 1 on 9 Oct in *Polk*, which was 3rd-latest (*vide* SJD-photo).

**Great Egret:** The most was 140 on 24 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) and the last was 1 on 21 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Snowy Egret:** One was at Rapp P *Page* on 7 Sep (KDY) and another was at Red Rock Res *Marion* on 13 Sep (SJD).

**Little Blue Heron:** No reports.

**Cattle Egret:** A group of 9 was found 17 Sep at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (GLV). The only other report was 1 on 26 Sep in rural *Decatur* (TNJ).

**Green Heron:** The last was 1 on 13 Sep at along the Iowa R at Coralville *Johnson* (MHB).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One persisted at Cedar L *Linn* 1 Aug–10 Oct (JF), an immature was at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 7 Sep (RLC), and 1-3 could be found at Ada Hayden P *Story* until 15 Nov (WO).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** No reports.

**White-faced Ibis:** The most was 17 on 8 Oct at Pintail M *Hardin* (TSS-photos). Also, a juvenile was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 17 Aug (SJD-photo) and 4 were at Dunbar Sl *Greene* 21 Oct (DTh-details).

**Plegadis species:** In the fall, separating the two species of dark ibis can be extremely difficult. One was at Rapp P *Page* 7 Sep (KDY), from 1–10 were on private property in *Dallas* 11 Sep–2 Oct (JB, AB), 5 were spotted flying over Luton *Woodbury* on 16 Sep (GLV), and the last of the season was 1 at Garlock Sl *Dickinson* 18 Oct–2 Nov (LAS).

**Turkey Vulture:** The last was 1 on 23 Nov in rural *Washington* (FB).

**Osprey:** Reported in low numbers from nine counties. Totals at the hawk watches in *Marshall* and *Pottawattamie* were both below their 10-year averages; the 7 recorded at Grammer Grove was the 2nd-lowest total in 26 years. The last was 1 on 5 Nov in *Pottawattamie* (JT).

**Mississippi Kite:** Last seen 29 Aug in Ottumwa where they nested (DP, KDy, TNJ). At the Hitchcock hawkwatch in *Pottawattamie*, 12 migrants were counted in September, with 10 occurring in the 5-day period 4-8 Sep. The last was 1 on 26 Sep (JT).

**Bald Eagle:** At the Grammer Grove hawk watch in *Marshall*, 108 of the season's 380 individuals were counted on 27 Nov (MP).

**Northern Harrier:** Numbers at both hawk watches were down. At Grammer Grove *Marshall*, only 19 were recorded, primarily in October (MP). At Hitchcock in *Pottawattamie*, the season total of 122 was the 2nd-lowest in their 14-year history. Around the state, 1 or 2 were reported from 8 scattered counties.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The first was 1 on 23 Aug in Mason City (BVL), followed by 1 on 28 Aug at Aspen Grove Cemetery in Des Moines (RLC). A total of 135 were counted during the 2-day period 20-21 Sep at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP). The season total at Hitchcock hawk watch in *Pottawattamie* was their 3rd-lowest.

**Cooper's Hawk:** The total of 21 at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP) was a record low (the high was 236 in 2002). In the west, the Hitchcock *Pottawattamie* total of 215 was about average (JT).

**Northern Goshawk:** For the first time since 2000, there was only one report: 1 was recorded at the Hitchcock hawk watch in *Pottawattamie* on 20 Nov (JT).



Sora, Big Wall L, Wright, 16 August 2015.  
Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Killdeer, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 5 October 2015.  
Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Reported only in the southern half of the state in *Appanoose*, *Fremont*, *Henry*, *Lee* and *Pottawattamie* (TMH, RLC, MSt, KDy, TNJ, JT). For only the 2nd time in the last 24 years, there were none recorded at Grammer Grove in *Marshall* (MP).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Some high daily counts were about 800 over *Ida Grove* *Ida* on 26 Sep (DoP), 375 on 20 Sep at *Grammer Grove Marshall* (MP), 197 on 26 Sep at *Hitchcock Pottawattamie* (JT), and 156 on 27 Sep at *Grammer Grove* (MP). The last report was 2 on 8 Oct at *Hitchcock* (JT).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Iowa lies on the very eastern edge of the range of this species and can experience dramatically variable season totals. This fall, the migration stayed to the west, pretty much missing Iowa. Only 23 were counted from the *Hitchcock* hawk watch in *Pottawattamie* with 19 of them occurring in the 3-day period 6-9 Oct. The previous low count was 143 in 2011, but as recently as 2013 the fall total there was more than 3500 counted. Elsewhere in the state there were reports from *Cerro Gordo*, *Black Hawk* and

*Jefferson* (BLV, TGS, DCP). The last was 3 on 9 Oct at *Hitchcock* (JT).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Extremely low totals were registered at both hawk watches, *Grammer Grove Marshall* and *Hitchcock Pottawattamie* (MP, JT). At *Hitchcock*, the record low season total of 1238 was the sixth consecutive year showing a decline from the previous year. Away from the hawk watches, a mix of subspecies was reported: *Krider's* in *Cerro Gordo*, and *Harlan's* and *Western* subspecies in *Polk* (CJF, JB, MHB).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** The first two were found by DCH on 10 Oct in *Boone*, followed by 1 on 28 Oct at *Moeckley Prairie Polk* (AB). Also reported from *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Lucas*, *Marshall*, *Polk* and *Pottawattamie* (KVS, MHB, MP, JT).

**Golden Eagle:** There were seven October reports with the first on 17 Oct at *Grammer Grove Marshall* (MP). Also reported in October in *Fayette* (PDBS), *Marion* (JF), and *Pottawattamie* (JT). These were followed by 14 reports in November, with the easternmost 1 on 15 Nov in *Allamakee* (BSc).

**Yellow Rail:** The only report was one



that flushed during haying operations on 15 Sep in *Ringgold* (Jenia Livingston).

**Virginia Rail:** The last was a report of 3 on 22 Sep at Snake Creek M *Greene* (DTh, LGD).

**Sora:** The most was 6 on 14 Aug at Snake Creek M *Greene* (LGD). The last few were 5 on 6 Oct at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ) followed by 4 on 11 Oct at Errington M *Polk* (DTh).

**Common Gallinule:** No reports.

**Sandhill Crane:** Reported from 10 locations across 9 counties primarily in eastern and northern Iowa. One on 15 Nov at Brenton Sl *Dallas* (AB) was the most unusual. Some high counts were 12 on 7 Aug at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* including both young and adults (LR) and 33 overhead on 21 Nov in *Johnson* (LGR).

**Black-necked Stilt:** After a failed nesting attempt in *Jackson* and several other summer reports (Dinsmore 2015), there were no fall reports.

**American Avocet:** Although a western species, avocets were reported in nearly all parts of the state, including *Winneshiek* and *Johnson* in the east (DC, JF), and *Appanoose* and *Marion* in the south (TNJ, SJD). Some high counts were 12 on 18 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh), 30 on 7 Sep at Jensen M *Madison* (Ruth Hummel-photo), and 88 on 7 Sep at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD). Also reported from *Woodbury*, *Kosuth*, *Linn* and *Guthrie* (GLV, MCK, JF, BE). The last two reports were 7 on 2-6 Nov at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF) and 1 on 11 Nov at Bays Branch *Guthrie*, a 2nd-latest date (Scott Rolfes *vide* SJD).

**Black-bellied Plover:** The first occurrences were on 4-8 Aug at Sand Point *Johnson*, including the high count of 9 on 7 Aug (JF, BSc, MHB). Also, 2 on 16 Aug at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR), 2 on 20 Aug in *Woodbury* (GLV), 1 on 2 Sep in *Boone*

(DCH), and 1 on 7 Sep at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP). The last was a group of 4 on 2-5 Oct at Hawkeye *Johnson* (PDBS, MHB).

**American Golden-Plover:** All: 1 on 3 Aug at the MidAmerican Energy plant *Pottawattamie* (POR), 3 on 2 Sep in *Boone* (DCH), 2 on 21 Sep in *Story* (HZ), 2 on 2 Oct at Hawkeye *Johnson* (MHB), 2 on 6 Oct in *Story* (HZ), and 17 on 8 Oct at Harrier M *Boone* (DCH).

**Semipalmated Plover:** The high count of 31 occurred in July (Dinsmore 2015), while smaller groups continued to be found throughout August at Hawkeye *Johnson*, Cardinal M *Winneshiek*, Saylorville Res *Polk*, near Dairy Ponds *Woodbury*, Rathbun L *Appanoose*, and Lake Sugema *Van Buren* (MHB, LR, RLC, GLV, KVS). The last three reports were 1 on 7 Sep at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP), 3 on 18 Sep in rural *Story* (HZ), and 1 on 6 Oct at Hawkeye *Johnson* (JF).

**Piping Plover:** Two adults were at the north pond of the MidAmerican Energy plant *Pottawattamie* on 3 Aug (POR). A juvenile was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9, 10 Aug (SJD, BE) and another was at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 10 Aug (JF).

**Killdeer:** There were four reports of more than 80, with the highest count 150 on 2 Sep in rural *Boone* (DCH, DTh, JB, LR).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** The last was 1 on 9 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** The most was 20 on 1 Aug at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC) and the last 1 on 15 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Sixteen at Dunbar Sl *Greene* on 21 Oct (DTh) was the most. The last was 1 on 23 Oct at Rathbun L *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Willet:** Up to 6 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* 10–17 Aug (BE, DTh). Otherwise, all reports were of singles in *Johnson*, *Story*,

*Tama*, *Winneshiek* and *Woodbury* (JF, HZ, MP, LR, GLV) with the last one at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* 17 Sep (JF).

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** The most was 250 on 14 Aug at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and the last was 2 on 29 Sep at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (MHB).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Only two reports, both of post-breeding groups at sod farms on 1 Aug: 11 in *Linn* (JF), and 12 in *Dallas* (JG, JB).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** A group of 26 was at *Saylorville Res Polk* on 17 Aug (RLC).

**Marbled Godwit:** The only report was a single bird at *Saylorville Res Polk* on 3 Aug (SJD).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: 1 on 4, 5 Aug at *Sand Point Johnson*, where 2 more were found 23 Aug (JF), and 1 on 19 Aug at *Saylorville Res Polk* (SJD).

**RED KNOT:** A basic adult was found foraging with 4 Black-bellied Plovers at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* 2-5 Oct, which is a 2nd-latest date (\*JF, \*MHB, \*BCC, \*PDDBS).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** The high count was 12 on 7 Sep at *Rapp Park Page* (KDY), far less than the 42 found in late July (Dinsmore 2015). Another 9 were at *Cardinal M Winneshiek* on 15 Aug (LR) and smaller numbers were reported from *Boone, Johnson, Lee*, and *Tama*. The last 5 were at *Union Grove SP Tama* on 10 Sep (MP).

**Sanderling:** All reports but two came from the shores of *Saylorville Res Polk*. Those were 3 on 11 Sep at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (JF) and 1 on 7 Nov at *Red Rock Res Marion* (TGS). At *Saylorville*, Sanderlings were found consistently starting in July (Dinsmore 2015) with the most, 7 on 23 Aug (JB), and the last, a juvenile photographed 10 Nov (SJD).

**Dunlin:** All: 5-9 at *Cardinal M Winneshiek* 25 Oct–8 Nov (PDDBS, LR), 7 at *L Macbride Johnson* 4 Nov (PDDBS), 1 at *Clear*



*Sanderling, Saylorville Res, Polk, 10 November 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

*L Cerro Gordo* on 11 Nov (RG), and 1 at *MidAmerican Energy ponds Pottawattamie* 28 Nov (AB).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Two were at *Union Hills Cerro Gordo* 3-18 Aug (PH, BVL), 3 were at *Union Grove SP Tama* 23 Aug (MP), 3 were at *Saylorville Res Polk* 23-27 Aug (JB, RLC), and 3 were at *Rathbun Appanoose* 28 Aug (RLC).

**Least Sandpiper:** The most was 100 at *Cardinal M Winneshiek* 7 Aug (LR), which was down from July counts of 150 and 508 (Dinsmore 2015), and the last was a group of 9 at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* on 3 Oct (MHB).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** There were six reports with photos or details of this rare fall migrant, all in October. Two were at *Lake Macbride Johnson* 4 October (MHB-photo), up to 16 were at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* 6, 7 Oct (JF-photos, BC-photos), 10 were at *Pin Oak M Lucas* 11 Oct (JN-photos), 31 were at *Red Rock Res Marion* 11 Oct (SJD-details), 2 were near

Ottumwa on 13 Oct (JJD-details), and 3 were at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* on 20 Oct (JF). Singles were also reported from *Story*, *Fayette* and *Tama*. In the fall, the White-rumped Sandpiper migration is primarily a coastal event, with only rare occurrences in the interior. So, the number of reports in Iowa this fall was unusual, but does fit a larger regional pattern that saw elevated reports from surrounding states.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** There were 11 reports from ten counties. Some high counts were 36 on 1 Aug at Blue Grass sod farm *Linn* (JF, DP), 14 at Sand Point *Johnson* on 3 Sep (JF), and 9 at Shattuck sod farm *Dallas* on 1 Aug (JG, JB).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** At USNWR in *Kossuth*, numbers peaked at about 2000 on 14 Aug (MCK). The only other large group was 200 at Saylorville Res ark *Polk* on 8 Aug (RLC). The last was a group of 6 at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* on 25 Oct (PDBS).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** For the second year in a row, reports of this species were minimal. The most was a mere 25 on 7 Aug at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR). Elsewhere, 20 were at Union Hills *Cerro Gordo* 3 Aug (PH) and 10 were at Rathbun *Appanoose* 28 Aug (RLC). The last was 1 on 3 Oct at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MMB).

**Western Sandpiper:** A juvenile was at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 12–19 Aug (MHB, JF), where a second one appeared on 23 Aug (JF). A third was found at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 28–30 Aug (RLC-details, MSt).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** All: 5 on 1 Aug at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR), 1 on 7 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 2 on 29 Aug at Heron Bend *Lee* (RLC), and 1 on 31 Aug at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Not many were found: 2 on 4 Oct at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB), 2–5 during 15–27 Oct at Hawkeye *Johnson* (JF), 12 on 21 Oct at Dunbar

Sl *Greene* (DTh), and 8 on 23 Oct at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ, MP).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Reported from 13 counties across the state. Peaked in late October with 31 at Silver L Marsh *Dickinson* on 18 Oct (LAS) and 32 at Colo Ponds *Story* on 23 Oct (HZ). The last was 1 on 24 Nov at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (RLC).

**American Woodcock:** One was found in Fairfield on 25 Sep (DCP), another was spotted 28 Sep on the NIACC Campus *Cerro Gordo* by a sharp-eyed biology student during a class outing (PH), and one was in rural *Floyd* on 1 Nov (CJF).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** One or two were at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 8–21 Aug (MHB, BSc, JF) and a single individual was record late by a day on 21 Oct at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DTh-details).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** At Cardinal M *Winneshiek*, 1 was present 4–15 Aug (LR, Ellen Bell). At Hawkeye WA *Johnson*, 2 were present 21–26 Aug (JF), another was there 28 Aug–1 Sep, and 2 late individuals were found there 6 Oct (JF).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:** An intermediate morph juvenile was found at Red Rock Res *Marion* 3 Oct (\*TGS) and stayed through 9 Oct (JF).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** A juvenile was present at Saylorville Res *Polk* 21–23 Nov (SJD, TMH, RIA, PHA, DTh, RLC).

**Sabine's Gull:** At Saylorville Res *Polk*, a juvenile was found 24 Sep (SJD), an adult was present 21–27 Nov (AB, SJD, RIA, PHA, JB, DTh, POR, MHB, WO), and a second juvenile was there 22 Nov (RLC).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first was found 9 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh). Some high counts were 82 at Rathbun L *Appanoose* 23 Oct (RLC), up to 510 at Saylorville 1–6 Nov (AB, JG), and 435 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 29 Nov (AB).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** A juvenile



*California Gull, Red Rock Res, Marion, 13 September 2015. Photograph by Jim Forde, Cedar Rapids, IA.*



*Belted Kingfisher, Dallas, 6 August 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

made a brief appearance below the dam at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 28 Nov (\*DTh).

**Laughing Gull:** Two juveniles were found this fall, one at Red Rock Res *Marion* 13 Sep-9 Oct (SJD-photo, JF-details) and another 24-26 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-photo).

**Franklin's Gull:** At Saylorville Res *Polk*, numbers peaked at 5425 on 12 Sep, and remained in the thousands at least through 9 Oct (AB, MHB, DTh). At Cedar L *Linn*, 2000 on 1 Oct were quite a few more than are usually found there (JF). The last was 1 on 22 Nov at Saylorville (RLC).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** A juvenile was photographed at the Red Rock Res dam *Marion* on the morning of 13 Sep (\*JF).

**Herring Gull:** The first were 2 juveniles at Red Rock Res *Marion* 26 Aug (JF). The most was 84 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 29 Nov (AB).

**Thayer's Gull:** The first was an unexpected adult on the record early date of Oct 4 at Gull Point SP *Dickinson* (LAS). On 26 Oct, 1 was at Red Rock Res *Marion*, where 2

adults appeared in late Nov (JF, AB). A 3rd-cycle individual was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Nov (AB) and an adult was a rare find at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 29 Nov (SJD).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** The first, an adult on 6 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk*, was 3rd-earliest (AB, MHB). A juvenile was at Red Rock Res *Marion* 10-26 Oct (RIA, PHA, JF), an adult was at Smith's Bay of Spirit L *Dickinson* 31 Oct and what may have been the same bird at Okobojo L 29 Nov (LAS), a juvenile was at Saylorville 8-14 Nov and another on 28 Nov (AB), and another juvenile was at Red Rock Res 29 Nov (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** A juvenile was found at Saylorville Res *Polk* 28 Nov (AB).

**Least Tern:** Up to 5 were counted at the MidAmerican Energy ponds *Pottawattamie* on 2-9 Aug (DTh, POR, RIA, PHA). Away from that breeding location, a juvenile was photographed at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* on 8 Aug (MHB), an adult was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 9-15 Aug (SJD, BE, DTh, MHB), and another adult was at Deer Island *Har-rison* 24 Aug (Jon Christensen *fide* SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** Reported from *Appanoose, Dickinson, Linn, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story* and *Van Buren*. By far, the most was 84 on 25 Aug at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). The last was 1 at Trickle Sl *Dickinson* 27 Sep (LAS).

**Black Tern:** After a successful Iowa nesting season (Dinsmore 2015), modest flocks were found at numerous locations across the state. Forty were at Cardinal M Winneshiek on 7 Aug (LR), up to 74 were counted at Saylorville during 8 Aug-2 Sep (RLC, DTh), 50 were at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* on 22 Aug (PH) and 10 were at Dairy Ponds *Woodbury* on 1 Sep (GLV).

**Common Tern:** The first few arrived on 7 Sep at Trickle Sl *Dickinson* and Saylorville Res *Polk* (LAS, AB). At Saylorville, 2 continued to be seen until 19 Sep (AB, JG). Elsewhere, 2 were at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Sep (JF) and the last 3 were at Trickle Sl 27 Sep (LAS).

**Forster's Tern:** Reported in *Appanoose, Cerro Gordo, Clay, Dickinson, Polk, Story* and *Van Buren*. Some high counts were 28 on 7 Sep at Hendrickson M *Story* (HZ), up to 43 at Saylorville Res *Polk* in Aug (DTh, RLC), and a second peak of 28 there on 12 Sep (AB). Two adults and a juvenile were observed on 28 Aug at Trumbull L *Clay*, where they may have nested (LAS). The last was 1 on 24 Oct at Saylorville (AB).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** The most was 28 on 25 Oct in *Colo Story* (HZ).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** In August, 1 or 2 were reported from *Boone, Cerro Gordo, Des Moines, Jefferson, Polk, Van Buren* and *Winnebago* (DCH, BVL, JWR, DCP, RLC, CJF). In September, 1 was at Willowglen Nursery *Winneshiek* on 7 Sep (LZ) and 1 was found at Saylorville Res *Polk* 13 Sep (RLC, KVS).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** All: 1 on 6 Aug along the Greenbelt trail *Cerro Gordo* (BVL),

an adult and a juvenile near Mason City *Cerro Gordo* on 8, 9 Aug (BVL), and 1 on the UIU campus *Fayette* 8 Sep (PDBS-details).

**Barn Owl:** At the Livingston farm in *Ringgold*, a pair raised a brood of seven which began to fledge in late August (Jenia Livingston, DTh).

**Snowy Owl:** An immature was photographed 25 Oct in *Chickasaw* (Corey Lange) and another was found deceased along a *Poweshiek* road 10 Nov (MP).

**Long-eared Owl:** The first were found 2 Nov at Moorehead P *Ida* (DoP). Another was at Myre Sl *Winnebago* 29 Nov (JB).

**Short-eared Owl:** The first was 1 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 21 Oct (JF), and was followed by 4 at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 27 Nov (KVS) and 1 at Brett Klima *Black Hawk* 29 Nov (TGS).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** At the Hitchcock banding station in *Pottawattamie*, the first capture occurred 13 Oct. Between that date and 22 Nov, 42 owls were captured and banded (JT). In addition, JT banded 4 owls at Dorothy Pecault Nature Center *Woodbury* 2 Nov, 3 owls at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* 9, 10 Nov, and 2 at Moorehead SP *Ida* 19 Nov. At Moorehead, the first arrivals were noted 5 Nov (DoP), but didn't stay.

**Common Nighthawk:** The most was 300 on 7 Sep in the skies over Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* (MBA). The last was 1 on 5 Oct at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP).

**Chimney Swift:** The most was an estimate of 250 in a swirling migrant group at Cedar L *Linn* 15 Sep (BSc). The last was 5 on 20 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (MHB).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** The last few were 1 on 7 Oct in Mystic *Appanoose* (TNJ) and 1 on 10 Oct in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF).

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD:** Iowa's second record appeared several times 16,



*Red-bellied Woodpecker, Kent P, Johnson, 22 November 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Eastern Kingbird, Terry Trueblood Rec Area, Johnson, 1 August 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

17 Nov at a feeder in Des Moines Polk. Photos are consistent with an adult female (Margaret Hutcheson-photos *vide* \*JB).

**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER:** An adult was found 28 Nov at Diamondhead L Guthrie but did not stay long (\*JDa). This is Iowa's 5th record, all fall arrivals.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** There were two reports of family groups: an adult and a juvenile on 27 Aug at Blackhawk Bottoms Des Moines (JWR) and an adult with 3 juveniles on 30 Aug at Hawkeye WA Johnson (MHB). Peak movements were noted 2 Sep at Hitchcock Pottawattamie when 127 migrants were counted (JT).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** The most was 13 on 29 Sep at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Also reported in Fayette, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marshall, Winneshiek, Polk, and Woodbury.

**Northern Flicker:** The peak of 110 were counted southbound on 29 Sep in Al-

gona (MCK). A red-shafted individual was found in Mason City Cerro Gordo 1 Nov (CJF).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reported from ten eastern counties. At the edges of its usual range were 2 reports: 1 at Briggs Woods P Hamilton on 30 Sep (DCH) and 1 along the North Raccoon R WA Dallas on 28 Nov (DRC).

**American Kestrel:** The season total of 59 at the Hitchcock hawk watch Pottawattamie was the lowest in their 14-year history (JT). Similarly, the 10 at Grammer Grove Marshall was a near record low (MP).

**Merlin:** The first arrived in a Des Moines back yard on 7 Sep (KVS). Of 13 reports, 4 were identified to race: 3 *columbarius* and 1 *richardsonii*.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Numbers were about average at the two hawk watches, 44 at Hitchcock Pottawattamie with a peak of 10 on 24 Sep (JT), and 6 at Grammer Grove Marshall (MP).



**Prairie Falcon:** Three were recorded at Hitchcock *Pottawattamie*, on 13-21 Nov, and a fourth was recorded in Dec (JT).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** After one was photographed in July (Dinsmore 2015), the next was 1 on 10 Aug at Oak Ridge CA *Woodbury* (GLV), followed by 1 on 18 Aug at Union Hills *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). The most was 4 on 1 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC). The last few were 1 on 19 Sep at Snyder Bend P *Woodbury* and 1 on 24 Sep at Decorah Hatchery *Winneshiek* (PDBS).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** The peak reporting day was 30 Aug when MHB counted 10 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson*, and RLC counted 10 at Shimek SF *Lee*. The last was 1 on 27 Sep at Pike Run WA *Muscatine* (MHB).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** The first were 1 on 19 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 1 on 20 Aug at Fountain Springs *Delaware* (BSc). Reports continued, all in the central and east, until the last on 19 Sep at Cottonwood RA *Polk* (RLC).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** The only report was 1 on 2 Aug at Maquoketa Caves SP *Jackson* (BR).

**Alder Flycatcher:** The last was a calling bird on 18 Aug in Algona *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Willow Flycatcher:** The last was 1 on 1 Sep at Saylorville WA *Dallas* (RLC).

**Least Flycatcher:** The first likely migrant was 1 on 12 Aug in rural *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). The last was 1 on 19 Sep at Cottonwood RA *Polk* (RLC).

***Empidonax* species:** A single individual was in a small flock of otherwise expected passerines at Whitebreast Point of Red Rock Res *Marion* on 28 Nov, a record late fall date (\*SJD).

**Eastern Phoebe:** The last was 1 on 3 Nov at Coralville Res *Johnson* (LGR).

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER:** An

adult male made a brief appearance on 21 Nov in Winterset *Madison*, making a stunning photo against a snowy background (\*JR). This is Iowa's 7th record.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** The last was 1 on 19 Sep at Coralville Res *Johnson* (LGR).

**Western Kingbird:** Only two reports: 1 on 7 Aug at Oak Ridge *Woodbury* (GLV) and an apparent family group of 5 in rural *Woodbury* on 10 Aug (GLV).

**Eastern Kingbird:** In the first week of Sep, RLC counted 38 around Saylorville *Polk*, and JB estimated at least 60 at Myre Sl *Winnebago*. The last was 1 at Ada Hayden P *Story* 17 Sep (WO).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** A family group of up to 4 individuals that was found 7 Aug at MidAmerican Energy ponds *Pottawattamie* continued in the area until at least 17 Aug (Mike Madsen, JB, KDy, POR).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** One was in rural *Boone* on 1 Aug (DCH) and another was at Christopherson Sl *Dickinson* 1 Nov (LAS).

**Northern Shrike:** The first few were 1 on 16 Oct in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 1 on 17-20 Oct at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR, DC), and 1 on 22 Oct at Hallett's Quarry *Polk* (JG). Also reported in Nov in *Woodbury* (GLV) and *Kossuth* (MCK).

**White-eyed Vireo:** In Fairfield *Jefferson*, up to 4 were present and vocal through the months of Aug and Sep, with the last one seen 21 Sep (DCP). Elsewhere, 1 was at Ledges SP *Boone* 20 Aug (DCH), 2 were at Shimek SF *Lee* 30 Aug (RLC), 1 was at Sugar Bottom *Johnson* 7 Sep (JF), and 1 was at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* 8 Sep (MP).

**Bell's Vireo:** Reported from the SE and the NW. The last two were 1 on 30 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) and 1 on 7 Sep at Owego wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reported widely, except from the southwest. The



*Yellow-throated Vireo*, Polk City WA, Polk, 10 October 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Blue-headed Vireo*, Sioux, 10 September 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

most was 8 on 20 Sep in Marion Linn (JOD). The last, on 10 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk, was 2nd-latest (SJD-photo).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The first was 1 on 27 Aug at Union Grove SP Tama (MP). The most was 10 on 20 Sep in Marion Linn (JOD). The last was 1 on 1 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

**Warbling Vireo:** The last 2 were on 19 Sep at Jester P Polk, and 20 Sep in Marion Linn (MHB, JOD).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** The first two were 1 on 15 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk and 1 on 19 Aug at Ada Hayden P Story (JB, WO). Peak numbers occurred between 12–20 Sep during which a total of 16 were reported primarily from central Iowa. The last was 1 on 27 Sep in Fairfield Jefferson (DCP).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Some high counts were 28 on 9 Sep at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC) and 19 on 12 Sep at L Macbride Johnson (MHB). The last was 1 on 1 Oct at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Blue Jay:** Peak movements were noted 28 Sep at Hitchcock Pottawattamie when 405 were counted from the hawk watch tower (JT).

**CLARK'S NUTCRACKER:** One was seen and heard at W Okoboji L Dickinson 5 Oct (JDJ).

**Black-billed Magpie:** No reports.

**Purple Martin:** The most was 67 on 8 Aug at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC). The last 2 were on 7 Sep at Ada Hayden P Story and Brenton Arboretum Dallas (WO, DTh).

**Tree Swallow:** The high count was 3050 on 4 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (AB). The last report was 350 on 18 Oct at Hawk-eye WA Johnson (MHB).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** The only report was 3 on 7 Sep at Carney M Polk (MHB).

**Bank Swallow:** RLC estimated 100 at Saylorville Res Polk on 8 Aug. The last was 1 on 12 Sep at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Cliff Swallow:** The last was 1 on 17 Sep at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Barn Swallow:** The last was 1 on 25 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (AB).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** The first was 1 on 8 Sep in Algona Kossuth (MCK) followed by singles in late Sep at Grammer Grove Marshall and Sparks Cemetery Boone (MP, LGD). Reported from 11 counties,





*White-faced Ibis, Saylorville Res, Polk, 17 August 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Cooper's Hawk, Saylorville Res, Polk, 25 October 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Virginia Rail, Snake Creek M, Greene, 12 August 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Red Knot, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 2 October 2015. Photograph by Jim Forde, Cedar Rapids, IA.*



*Great Horned Owl, Sioux, 13 November 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*Barred Owl, Iowa City, Johnson, 2 August 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Iowa City, Johnson, 19 August 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Vermilion Flycatcher, Winterset, Madison, 21 November 2015. Photograph by Joanne Rice, Winterset, IA.*



*Golden-crowned Kinglet, Boone, 20 October 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Townsend's Solitaire, Slater, Story, 24 October 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Cedar Waxwing, Boone, 26 August 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Golden-winged Warbler, Boone, 31 August 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Northern Parula, Boone, 30 August 2015.  
Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Le Conte's Sparrow, Kirchner Prairie, Clay, 27  
September 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers,  
Hospers, IA.*



*Baltimore Oriole, Iowa City, Johnson, 2 Sep-  
tember 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa  
City, IA.*



*Pine Grosbeaks, Sheldon, O'Brien, 21 Novem-  
ber 2015. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux  
City, IA.*



*Blue Jay*, Kent P, Johnson, 22 November 2015.  
Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Brown Creeper*, Iowa City, Johnson, 11 October 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.

with the most 11 on 22 Nov at Hampton Cemetery *Franklin* (AB).

**Brown Creeper:** DCH reported the season's first on 5 Sep in *Boone*, and the most, 4 on 7 Oct at Ledges SP *Boone*. Also reported from *Appanoose*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dickinson*, *Jefferson*, *Linn*, *Marshall*, *Polk* and *Story*.

**House Wren:** The last was 1 on 8 Oct at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Winter Wren:** The first four reports were all in Sep: 2 on 24 Sep along the *Winebago R* in *Mason City Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 1 on 28 Sep at *Ambrose Call SP Kossuth* (MCK), 1 on 30 Sep at *Briggs Woods P Hamilton* (DCH), and 1 on 30 Sep at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Sedge Wren:** The most was 15 at *Neal Smith NWR Jasper* on 9 Sep (KVS). The last was 1 on 26 Oct at *Owego Wetlands Woodbury* (GLV).

**Marsh Wren:** The most was 12 on 25 Sep at *Errington M Polk* (RLC), and the last were 2 on 20 Nov at *Anderson L Hamilton* (SJD).

**Carolina Wren:** There were seven re-

ports from central and southeastern Iowa, plus a vocal group of 3 in the far west at *Stone SP Woodbury* on 1 Sep (GLV).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The most was 6 on 27 Aug at *Sparks Cemetery Boone* (LGD) and the last was 1 on 13 Sep at *Grammer Grove Marshall* (MP).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** The first 5 were found in *Mason City Cerro Gordo* on 29 Sep (BLV, PH), followed immediately by groups of 11 and 6 on 30 Sep in *Wright and Hamilton* (DCH). Reported widely, except in the SW, with the last 1 on 24 Nov in *Fairfield Jefferson* (DCP).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** The first was 1 on 9 Sep at *Black Hawk Creek WA Grundy* (MP). Some high counts were 15 on 29 Sep in *Mason City Cerro Gordo* (PH), 12 on 7 Oct at *Ledges SP Boone* (DCH), and 11 on 23 Oct at *Rathbun Appanoose* (RLC). The last was 1 on 6 Nov at *Water Works P Polk* (JB).

**Eastern Bluebird:** The most were 29 at *Cottonwood RA Polk* on 20 Sep (MHB).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** One was photographed 24 Oct at *Slater Story* (SJD) and a



*Sedge Wren, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 1 August 2015. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.*



*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Boone, 27 August 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

second was at Hickory Hill P *Tama* 14 Nov (TGS).

**Veery:** The last two were found 18, 19 Sep in *Linn*, one at Marion and another at Palisades-Kepler SP (JOD, BSc).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** All: 1 on 8 Sep in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BLV), 2 on 9 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC-details), and 1 on 24 Sep at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP).

**Swainson's Thrush:** The first was found 26 Aug at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc) and was followed by steady reports, all from central and eastern Iowa, until the last few on 6, 7 Oct at Waterworks P *Polk* and Ledges SP *Boone* (DCH).

**Hermit Thrush:** On 29 Sep, the first 6 were reported, 3 from Mason City *Cerro Gordo* and another 3 from Ada Hayden P *Story* (BVL, WO). Reports of 1-3 continued through the end of the season.

**Wood Thrush:** The only report was 1 on 22 Aug at Amana Woods *Iowa* (BSc).

**American Robin:** Peak movements were noted 22 Oct at Hitchcock *Pottawattamie* when 4885 were counted from the hawk watch tower (JT).

**Varied Thrush:** One was photographed at Linwood Cemetery *Dubuque* during 23-25 Oct, and may be a first *Dubuque* record (DAS).

**Gray Catbird:** The last sighting was a Johnston *Polk* yard bird for DTh on 4 Nov.

**Brown Thrasher:** Two in Ames *Story* on 19 Sep were the last (DCH).

**Northern Mockingbird:** There were two reports: 1 on 19 Aug at L Sugema *Van Buren* (DCH) and 1 on 23 Aug at Morgan Creek P *Linn* (BSc).

**American Pipit:** The first was 1 on 30 Sep at Water Works P *Polk* (JB). It was followed by steady reports until the last 11 on 6 Nov at Snake Creek M *Greene* (TMH). Some high counts were 22 on 15 Oct at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP) and 32 on 1 Nov at Iowa L *Emmet* (LAS).

**Lapland Longspur:** The first report was of 27 on 6 Nov at Snake Creek M *Greene* (TMH). The most was 3000 on 14 Nov at the Spencer *Clay* airport (LAS).

**Smith's Longspur:** The only report was 1 on 6 Nov at Snake Creek M *Greene* (TMH).



*Prothonotary Warbler, Sullivan SI, Des Moines, 29 August 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Eastern Bluebird, Jester P, Polk, 29 November 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

**Snow Bunting:** The first 2 were found 16 Nov at Grundy County L *Grundy* (MP). The median arrival date over the last 17 years is 26 Oct, so perhaps the 3-week lateness is indicative of the mild conditions this fall.

**Ovenbird:** The last was 1 on 30 Sep in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Northern Waterthrush:** The first was 1 on 23 Aug in rural *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), followed by 1 on 27 Aug at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP). All reports were of single birds in central and eastern Iowa, with the last 1 on 13 Oct at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-photo).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** The first was found in a small mixed group of migrants on 8 Aug in rural *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), which ties the 3rd-earliest date. The most was 10 on 26 Aug at various locations around *Cerro Gordo* (BVL, RG). One or two also reported from 12 central and eastern counties, with the last 2 on 21 Sep at Lime Creek Conservation A *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** The last would have been 1 on 1 Sep at Willowglen Nurs-

ery *Winneshiek* (LZ) were it not for a record-late individual photographed on 2 Oct at Riverton WA Fremont (\*JN).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** Reported from 14 counties beginning with 1 on 12 Aug at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RG) and ending with 1 on 6 Oct at Ryerson's Woods *Johnson* (LGR). The most was 6 at Willowglen Nursery *Winneshiek* during 5-7 Sep (LZ).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** All: 3 on 29 Aug in rural *Des Moines* (RLC) and 1 on 30 Aug at Deere Dike *Dubuque* in the same vicinity where breeding occurred during summer (DAS).

**Tennessee Warbler:** The first report was of 2 birds at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* 11 Aug (BVL). The most was 20 on 12 Sep at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB) and the last was 1 on 8 Oct at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** The first was a little early on 5 Sep in *Boone* (DCH). The median arrival date over the last 15 years is 10 Sep. There were 19 reports of 1-6 birds primarily from central Iowa, end-



*Magnolia Warbler*, Boone, 14 September 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*Black-throated Green Warbler*, Boone, 22 September 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

ing with 1 on 23 Oct at Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Nashville Warbler:** The first migrant was found 13 Aug at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO). There were 27 reports from 13 counties, with the most 12 on 1 Sep at *Saylorville WLA Dallas* (RLC) and the last 1 on 11 Oct at *Sparks Cemetery Boone* (LGD).

**Mourning Warbler:** There were eight reports of 1 or 2 with the first 1 on 18 Aug in rural *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) and the last 1 on 29 Sep at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Kentucky Warbler:** Up to 4 were seen well on the IOU meeting field trip 30 Aug at *Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren* (KVS, JB).

**Common Yellowthroat:** The last was a juvenile female on 23 Nov at *Anderson L Hamilton* (SJD).

**Hooded Warbler:** The only report was 1 at *Shimek SF Lee* 29 Aug (TMH).

**American Redstart:** Reported from 13 counties, with high counts of 18 on 12 Sep at *L Macbride Johnson* (MHB) and 10 on 7 Sep at *Willowglen Nursery Winneshiek* (LZ). The last was 1 on 30 Sep at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Cape May Warbler:** All: 1 on 23 Aug at *L Pahoja Lyon* (KDy), 2 juveniles on 12 Sep at *L Macbride Johnson* (MHB), and 1 on 17 Sep in *Marion* (JOD).

**Northern Parula:** There were nine reports from widely scattered locations across the state, all of single birds except 2 on 12 Sep at *Saylorville Polk* (RLC). The last was 1 in *Spencer Clay* on 1 Oct (LAS).

**Magnolia Warbler:** The first was 1 on 18 Aug in a mixed flock in rural *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). The high count was 6, on 8 Sep at *Willowglen Nursery in Winneshiek* (LZ) and again on 12 Sep at *L Macbride Johnson* (MHB). The last was 1 on 6 Oct at *Ryerson's Woods Johnson* (LGR).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** First found on 25 Aug at two locations: *Rock Creek SP Jasper* and *Evan's Preserve Cerro Gordo* (MP, BVL). The most was 5 on 13 Sep at *Jester P Polk* (RLC). The last two were on 29 Sep in *Marion*, and 30 Sep in *Briggs Woods P Hamilton* (JOD, DCH).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** The first tied the 3rd-earliest date of 9 Aug in my *Mason City Cerro Gordo* back yard. Reported from 10 widely scattered counties, with the most





*Wilson's Warbler, Sioux, 28 September 2015.*  
Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

3 on 19 Sep at Cottonwood RA *Polk* (RLC) and the last 1 on 26 Sep at L Macbride *Johnson* (MHB).

**Yellow Warbler:** The last was 1 on 10 Sep at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** The first was 1 on 13 Sep in Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BSc). There were 21 reports from 13 counties, with the most 13 on 12 Sep at L Macbride SP *Johnson* (MHB) and the last 1 on 6 Oct at Ryerson's Woods *Johnson* (LGR).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** There were two reports of this rare fall migrant. JOD photographed one that visited his Marion *Linn* back yard 9-14 Sep and another was found in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 24 Sep (BVL-details).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** All: An adult male was at Hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* on 4 Sep (LGR-photo), an adult female was in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* on 8 Sep (BVL), and an adult male was at Ryerson's Woods *Johnson* on 6 Oct (LGR-photo).

**Palm Warbler:** The first two were on 12 Sep in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* and on 13 Sep at Swan L *Johnson* (BVL, MHB).

**Pine Warbler:** No reports.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First found

on 12 Sep at Saylorville *Polk* (RLC) and 13 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Some high counts were 35 at Hawkeye WA on 24 Sep (MHB), 60 on 29 Sep at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 82 on 23 Oct at Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One on 23 Aug at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (DAS) and another on 8 Sep at Coralville Dam *Johnson* (LGR) were the only reports.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER:** An apparent first fall male was found 22 Aug south of Center L *Dickinson*, near Spirit Lake, associating with Blackburnian and Black-throated Green warblers (\*JDJ, \*LAS, \*POR). First found by Wendell Hanson, it stayed in the neighborhood through 23 Aug. This is Iowa's fourth record and the first in fall.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** The first 3 were in the company of a rare Townsend's Warbler on 22 Aug in *Dickinson* (LAS). The most was 5 on 27 Sep at Sedan *Appanoose* (MSt) and the last was 2 on 8 Oct in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Canada Warbler:** The first was 1 on 11 Aug at McIntosh Woods SP *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). One or two were reported 11 eastern and central counties with the last 1 on 24 Sep in Marion *Linn* (JOD).

**Wilson's Warbler:** The first few were 1 on 22 Aug in rural *Cerro Gordo*, 3 on 23 Aug in Gitchie Manitou State Preserve *Lyon*, and 2 on 23 Aug at Cherry Glen RA *Polk* (BVL, KDy, JB). Reports thereafter were of single birds except for 4 on 5 Sep along the Comet Trail *Grundy* (MP). The last was 1 on 28 Sep in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** The only report was 1 on 8 Sep at Jester P *Polk* (RIA, PHA).

**Spotted Towhee:** No reports.

**Eastern Towhee:** Single birds were reported from *Appanoose*, *Cerro Gordo*, *John-*



*Fox Sparrow, Iowa City, Johnson, 22 November 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Northern Cardinal, Kent P, Johnson, 22 November 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

son, Jefferson, Polk and Van Buren, spanning the season.

**American Tree Sparrow:** The first 2 were at Lime Creek Conservation Area *Cerro Gordo* 17 Oct (BVL). By the end of the month, DCH counted 36 in one flock at Harrier M *Boone*, and two weeks later MHB counted 90 at Spring Run *Dickinson*.

**Chipping Sparrow:** The last was 1 on 23 Nov at an Urbandale *Polk* feeder (BE).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Three found on 25 Aug in northern *Cerro Gordo* may still have been on territory (BVL). All others: 1 on 15 Sep at Errington M *Polk* (RLC-details), 1 on 16 Oct in Indianola *Warren* (AMJ), and 2 on 20 Oct at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (BVL-details).

**Field Sparrow:** The last two were 1 on 1 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 1 on 2 Nov at the NIACC campus *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Vesper Sparrow:** The only report was 1 on 23 Nov feeding along a snow-covered road in *Winneshiek* (LR).

**Lark Sparrow:** All: Singles on 7 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 14 Aug in rural *Floyd* (CJF), 20 Aug at Shimek SF *Lee* (TMH), and 7 Sep at Big Creek SP *Polk* (DTh), plus 4 on 23 Sep at Cone M *Louisa* (JOD).

**Savannah Sparrow:** The last was 5 on 10 Oct at Harrier M *Boone* (TMH).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Not found after two early Aug reports: 1 on 2 Aug at Ciha Fen Preserve *Johnson* (MHB) and 3 on 7 Aug in rural *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** The only report was up to 3 on 1-15 Aug at Fairfield (DCP).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Arrived on 26, 27 Sep, about a week beyond the median arrival date, at Pintail M *Hardin* and Kirchner Prairie *Clay* (MP, LAS). Also reported in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dallas*, *Polk*, *Story* and *Wright*. The most was 13 on 27 Sep at Kirchner Prairie (LAS) and the last was 1 on 9 Nov in a private prairie in *Dallas* (KG).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** All: 1 on 12 Sep at



*Blue Grosbeak, Sioux, 8 September 2015.  
Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*

Pintail M *Hardin* (TSS), 1 or 2 at Errington M *Polk* 15-25 Sep (RLC), 7 on 26 Sep at Pintail M *Hardin* (MP), and 7 on 7 Oct at Buckshot M *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**Fox Sparrow:** The first few were on 29 Sep in *Woodbury* and *Cerro Gordo* (GLV, BVL). From 1-6 were reported from 10 counties across the state consistently to the end of the season.

**Song Sparrow:** The most was 22 on 1 Nov at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** The first found, on 19 Sep at *Jester P Polk* (MHB), was about a week beyond the median arrival date. The most was 24 on 30 Sep in rural *Wright* (DCH) and the last was 1 on 30 Nov in *Mason City Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**White-throated Sparrow:** The first few were found on 11, 12, 13 Sep at *Jester P Polk*, *Mason City Cerro Gordo*, and *Grammer Grove Marshall* (RIA, PHA, PH, BVL, MP). The most was 122 on 23 Oct at *Rathbun Appanoose* (RLC).

**Harris's Sparrow:** The first, on 2 Oct at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO), was about a

week beyond the median arrival date of 25 Sep, and it was unusual. The next report came 10 days later. The most was 25 on 27 Oct at *Jester Park Polk* (DCH).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** The first 2 were at *Terry Trueblood RA Johnson* on 30 Sep (MHB). More often seen in small groups than singly, the high counts were 10 on 3 Oct at *Brenton Arboretum Dallas* (JB) and 35 on 27 Oct at *Jester P Polk* (DCH).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** The first was 1 on 20 Sep at *Squaw Creek P Linn* (JF).

**Summer Tanager:** On 31 Aug, one hit the window at the *Neal Smith NWR Visitor's Center Jasper* enabling close inspection and a photo before flying off (KVS). Elsewhere, 1 was at *Saylorville Polk* on 6 Sep (RLC) and LAS described an orange variant at *Kindlespire P Clay* on 13 Sep.

**Scarlet Tanager:** At least two were seen by IOU field trip participants on 29 Aug in *Lee* and 30 Aug in *Des Moines* (TMH, JWR). Another, on 13 Sep, was a new yard bird for DTh in *Johnston Polk*. The last was 1 on 4 Oct at *Bacon Creek P Woodbury* (GLV).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** MHB counted 11 at *Hawkeye Johnson* on 30 Aug. The last 2 were at *Saylorville Res Polk* on 18 Sep (RLC).

**Blue Grosbeak:** All reports: 1 in rural *Madison* 1 Aug (JG), 2 north of *Mason City* appeared territorial 15-25 Aug (BVL), 3 in *Pottawattamie*, 2 in *Mills*, and 3 in *Fremont* on 16 Aug (Kdy), the high count of 9 on 20 Aug in *Woodbury* (GLV), 1 at *L Pahoja Lyon* 21 Aug, 3 on 28, 29 Aug in *Des Moines* during the IOU Fall Meeting field trips (JWR, RLC, JB), and a family group of 5 including 3 recently fledged young near the NIACC campus east of *Mason City* 31 Aug-13 Sep (BVL, CJF).

**Indigo Bunting:** The last was 1 on 30 Sep at *Voas Nature Area Dallas* (RLC).



*Red Crossbill, Sheldon, O'Brien, 21 November 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 2 October 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

**Dickcissel:** Up to 10 were at Oak Grove RA Polk on 27 Aug (RLC). The last was 1 at Snake Creek M Greene on 9 Oct (BSc).

**Bobolink:** As many as 120 were at Marsh Farm Wetland Dallas on 7 Sep (AB). Flocks of 20-30 were reported from Jasper, Polk and Winnebago (RLC, JB, KVS). The last was 6 on 26 Sep at Pintail M Hardin (MP).

**Red-winged Blackbird:** This species is doing well enough to gather in a flock estimated at 50,000 at Colo Ponds Story on 13 Sep (DCH).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** The most was 20 on 3 Oct at Brenton Arboretum Dallas (JB). The last was 1 on 26 Nov in rural Floyd (CJF).

**Western Meadowlark:** The most was 43 on 10 Aug in rural Woodbury (GLV).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** The only report was a flock of 200 at Dairy Ponds Woodbury on 7 Sep (GLV).

**Rusty Blackbird:** The first was a group

of 45 at Bjorkboda M Hamilton on 30 Sep (DCH). Other notable flocks were 83 on 18 Oct at Silver Lake M Dickinson (LAS), 75 on 20 Oct at Zirbel Sl Cerro Gordo (BVL), 30 on 27 Oct at Ada Hayden P Story (WO), and 60 on 7 Nov at L Macbride Johnson (MHB). Following unusually heavy snows at the end of the third week of November, a few showed up at feeders, including 6 in Indianola, 4 in Boone, and 3 in Mason City (AMJ, LGD, PH). From 1-16 were also reported in Allamakee, Dallas, Fayette, Greene, Jasper, Polk, Winneshiek (BSc, KG, PDBS, KVS, DCH).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Gathered along the Little Sioux R Dickinson 18 Oct-2 Nov, with a peak count of 67 (LAS). The only other report was 1 on 21 Oct at Dunbar Sl Greene (DTh).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Two reports: 17 at Dunbar Sl Greene 21 Oct (DTh) and 3 at Snake Creek M Greene on 6 Nov (TMH).

**Orchard Oriole:** All: 1 on 1 Aug at Cardinal M Winneshiek (DC), 1 on 14 Aug

at Brownville WA *Mitchell* (PH), 1 on 20 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 1 on 30 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Baltimore Oriole:** The last was 1 on 8 Sep in Mystic *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**PINE GROSBEEK:** The only report was 2 female/immature types found on 21 Nov at Sheldon Cemetery *O'Brien* (\*JDJ, \*LAS, \*POR, \*AB); they stayed through the end of the season.

**Purple Finch:** The first few were 1 on 7 Sep in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF) and 3 on 19 Sep at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (JF). From 1-5 were also reported from *Jefferson, Johnson, Polk* and *Winnebago*.

**Red Crossbill:** Single individuals were yard birds for MCK in Algona *Kossuth* on 13 Sep and CJF in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* on 15 Nov. One was heard calling overhead 22 Oct in Polk City *Polk* (AB), up to 7 were present at Sheldon Cemetery *O'Brien* from 21 Nov through the end of the season (POR), and 1 was found in *Buchanan* 29 Nov (TGS).

**White-winged Crossbill:** At least 5 were in the company of 2 Pine Grosbeaks

and a handful of Red Crossbills in the Sheldon Cemetery *O'Brien* starting on 21 Nov, the day after an unusually heavy snowfall (POR).

**Common Redpoll:** All: 2 on 29 Oct in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 1 on 13 Nov in Ames *Story* (SJD), 2 on 13 Nov at Spring Run Wetland *Dickinson* (MHB), 3 on 13 Nov at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (LR), 1 or 2 on 21 Nov at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, TMH), and 1 on 21 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Pine Siskin:** The first was 1 at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* on 7 Sep (JB) and was followed by reports of 1-12 in *Boone, Cerro Gordo, Dickinson, Grundy, Johnson* and *Polk* (DCH, BVL, LAS, MHB, MP, RLC, BE, DTh).

**American Goldfinch:** DCH estimated 160 at Harrier M *Boone* on 28 Nov.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** After reports at Otter Creek M *Tama* in June and July (Dinsmore 2015), at least 2 persisted there as late as 9 Aug (AB). Also reported from more traditional regions in *Des Moines, Johnson, Muscatine, Linn* and *Delaware* (JWR, JB, MHB, CRE).

## COMMENT

This report would not be possible without the data contributed by the 64 people listed below, and the 7 others whose names appear in the text. These are your data, and this is your journal and organization. The gathering, recording, and then sharing of this information is a key factor in assisting the IOU in fulfilling a fundamental mission to preserve the ornithological record of the state of Iowa.

The efforts of these people has enabled the summarizing of the presence of 269 species from 1 August to 30 November 2015. They contributed 2078 records from 276 locations in 66 of Iowa's 99 counties. I really appreciate every contribution, and all the supporting details, comments and photos. If you do not already share your data with the IOU, please consider participating in this worthwhile process.

This article also makes use of data collected and previously published elsewhere. Some of the sources of these data are: USFWS waterfowl counts at DeSoto NWR, Iowa DNR August Roadside Surveys, the Illinois Natural History Survey, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the IA-Bird listserv.

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Fawn Bowden	FB	Riverside	Kevin Murphy	KM	Ames
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Larry Dau	LGD	Boone	Paul Roisen	POR	Sioux City
James Dinsmore	JJD	The Villages, FL	Linda Rudolph	LGR	Coralville
Stephen Dinsmore	SJD	Ames	John Rutenbeck	JWR	Longmont CO
Keith Dyche	KDy	Shenandoah	William Scheible	BSc	Cedar Rapids
James Durbin	JOD	Marion	Tom Schilke	TSS	Waterloo
Chris Edwards	CRE	Solon	Lee Schoenewe	LAS	Spencer
Bery Engebretsen	BE	Urbandale	David Shealer	DAS	Dubuque
Carolyn Fischer	CJF	Mason City	Paul Skrade	PDBS	Decorah
James Forde	JF	Cedar Rapids	Michael Stephens	MS	Centerville
Kevin Gerety	KG	Yale	Tommy Stone	TGS	Waterloo
Jacob Gilliam	JG	Norwalk	Dennis Thompson	DTh	Johnston
Rita Goranson	RG	Mason City	Jerry Toll	JT	Omaha
Tyler Harms	TMH	Ames	Karen Viste-Sparkman	KVS	Des Moines
Douglas Harr	DCH	Ogden	Gerald Von Ehwegen	GLV	Sioux City
Paul Hertzell	PH	Mason City	Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada
Margo Hutcheson	MH	Des Moines	Ric Zarwell	RZ	Lansing
Ann Johnson	AMJ	Norwalk	Lee Zieke	LZ	Decorah

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Jungers, J. First nesting record for Spotted Towhee in Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 85:121.

1432 East State Street, Mason City, IA 50401

# Raptor Banding at Hitchcock Hawk Watch, Fall 2015

*Jerry Toll*

The annual raptor migration monitoring that takes place each fall at Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch (HNCH) has been a primary focus for the past 13 years. For the last nine years we have also been banding raptors and collecting age, gender, health, and subspecies data on the individuals we capture. Here, we report on those efforts for the fall 2015 migration season.

## DIURNAL RAPTOR BANDING EFFORT

This past banding season was once again full of surprises. Weather systems had a negative effect on the hawk watch for the second year in a row, although this was not reflected in the banding efforts. The period 8-14 September was fairly typical with 16 raptors banded. During the next two weeks (15-30 September), despite weak weather systems and a slow showing at the HawkWatch, we banded another 95 raptors. There were even days we banded more hawks than were seen at the HawkWatch. The raptors during this period were particularly aggressive for the lure birds, not something we observe typically for more than a day or two at a time during the entire season. On 30 September, we had the second most productive session ever with 17 raptors banded.

During October, historically the peak month, weather systems that concentrate diurnal raptors at Hitchcock continued. This was similar to September with more rain, weak cold fronts, and slowly cooling temperatures. During the first half of October, 50 raptors were banded. During the second half of October, a high pressure system settled in and only 34 raptors were banded. Another 3 raptors were incidentally banded in November after the close of the official season. The effort ended with 198 diurnal raptors banded, 20 more than the 2014 season record. The three foundation species that make up the bulk of the captures (Red-tailed, Cooper's, and Sharp-shinned hawks) were all above the yearly average; Sharp-shinned Hawk showed the greatest increase at 50% above the yearly average. Additionally, two Broad-winged Hawks were captured; only five had been banded in all previous years combined. We banded an incredible five Merlins, 3 *columbarius* and 2 *richardsonii*; these were the first prairie Merlins for the station. The real story of the season was that up to the last official day we had not banded the raptor I enjoy handling the most. Then on the last day, in the last hour with only 4 minutes left in the season, a Peregrine Falcon made three passes and was captured!

## NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL BANDING ACTIVITIES

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding commenced on 9 October with the first capture occurring on the 13th. The weather systems that were not conducive to the diurnal banding operations in October were advantageous for owl banding. Saw-whets seem to prefer

light winds particularly with a northern component. This season the peak period occurred from 29 October to 10 November when 26 of the 40 Saw-whets were banded. During that period, two previously banded individuals were recaptured, both from Minnesota. The first one captured on 6 November came from Carver County Minnesota near Minneapolis. The second one came from Hawk Ridge at Duluth. The season at Hitchcock Nature Center ended on 22 November with the last owl banded.

Northern Saw-whet Owl banding was successfully attempted at three other locations in the Loess Hills with the intent of seeing if some of these owls would be recaptured at other Loess Hills locations. On 2 November I banded four Saw-whets at the Dorothy Pe-caut Nature Center near Sioux City. On 9-10 November, three Saw-whets were banded at Waubonsie State Park in Fremont County. On 19 November, two Saw-whets were banded at Moorhead Park in Ida County. I returned to Waubonsie State Park on 23 November and recaptured one of the Saw-whets banded during the last visit to the park. Unfortunately, no Saw-whets were recaptured from other locations.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board and Foundation for their continuing support, both financial and logistical, at Hitchcock Nature Center. Additional financial support was provided by The Audubon Society of Omaha, The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and Des Moines Audubon Society for the Northern Saw-whet Owl banding program. Our licensed banding crew of Sandy Reinken, Veronica Mecko, and me were generously supported by dedicated volunteers Greg Nelson, Teresa Ely, Jean Martin, Keith Dyche, Janis Paseka, Ryan Johnson, and Ty Smedes.

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# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Business Meeting

14 May 2016

The I.O.U. spring business meeting was held at Quality Inn and Suites in Ames, Iowa. President Francis Moore called the meeting to order at 4:44 P.M. In attendance were Dennis Thompson, vice-president; Stuart Sparkman, secretary; Mary Beth Hunt, treasurer; directors at large Gerald White, Tyler Harms, and Linda Rudolph, and members of the organization.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the August and November Board of Directors meetings have been published in *Iowa Bird Life*. Ann Johnson moved to approve the minutes as published, and Steve Dinsmore seconded. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Beth Hunt remarked that our financial situation is as expected and gave a brief summary of our financial status. Profit/loss and balance sheet comparisons were presented. Once again it was explained that year to year comparisons are difficult due to the irregular nature of the timing of renewals, billing, and payments. Mary Beth asked if there were budget questions but none were heard.

**Membership Coordinator's Report:** Cecille Thompson reported that our current membership total is at 384. Membership numbers trending down, and there are 66 non-renewals from last year. Members were informed that website information includes renewal/non-renewal information. It was suggested that members consult the list and invite non-renewing members back to the group.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Publications Committee:** Ann Johnson reported that a shortage of content continues to be a problem. Members are invited and urged to contribute copy to editors for

publication. The committee is considering converting *Iowa Bird Life* to downloadable e-reader format. Cecille Thompson volunteered to assist Ann in this endeavor.

**Records Committee:** Ann Johnson reported on behalf of chair Paul Hertzell. In 2015 there were 30 records reviewed, with 28 accepted and two not accepted. In the current year so far there has been one record reviewed and accepted, with a couple more currently under review. Recent Iowa reintroductions of Greater Prairie-Chicken will raise some questions for the committee.

**Membership Committee:** Paul Skrade offered a report. Numbers are down and the committee is concerned. Electronic reminders for renewal were offered with little success. I.O.U. logo apparel will now be purchased through website rather than the organization offering merchandise on site at meetings. On the subject of dues, student designation went from \$12 to \$20 without age limit, with access to electronic publications only. The organization is moving toward an electronic-only membership option for all. Tyler Harms was asked whether there is outreach to Iowa Young Birders members, as there is currently only one youth enrolled as a member. It is difficult with a group such as ours to cater to a wide range of ages, he remarked. Youth receive field cards and the yellow book already, and the committee is

looking at the possibility of a free membership for youth members.

**Projects Committee:** Tyler Harms reported on behalf of chair Candace Havelly. A total of 17 grant applications were received 17 requesting approximately \$18,000, while \$10,424 was available to fund projects. Thirteen of the requests were fully funded or partially funded at 50% in the areas of bird research, bird education (field guides), and structures to benefit birds. Stickers and placards with the I.O.U. logo are sent to recipients to display on items funded by the organization. The BOD determined that we will not fund indirect costs associated with these projects, such as administrative fees. All grant money shall go directly to the project. Additionally, the I.O.U. will no longer pay fees for checks lost by recipients. In such a case a new check will be issued with the amount diminished by the amount of the bank fees. The board has approved Joe Jungers to replace Candace Havelly who has completed her four year term on the committee.

**Library/Historical Committee:** Hank Zaletel announced a bequest from the estate of Cal and Bernie Knight consisting of ten boxes of books, many photographs in the form of slides, a set of birding records, and some vintage cameras. The cameras have been sold, and the birding records and slides have been sent to the archives. Iowa State University was granted permission by the board of directors to digitize parts of the I.O.U. archive for online access at no cost to our organization.

**Events Committee:** A field trip was offered by I.O.U. on 30 April in the Shimek State Forest. The event included about 20 people, and despite poor weather the trip was deemed a success. Upcoming on 18 June will be another field trip, this time to Yellow River State Forest. Preregistration will be

necessary, with a small fee (\$5 member/\$10 non-member) to increase the likelihood that people show up. Discussion ensued over whether a fee is off-putting, or increases the value of the event in the user's mind. A question arose over whether a hypothetical out-of-state trip would require participants to be members of the organization, a practice already in place by neighboring organizations in Illinois and Minnesota. No decision was made. Paul Roisen continues to work on the project of updating state hotspots for the gazetteer. He reported significant progress, and requests additional help in covering the remaining 50 or so counties.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

**Communications Committee discussion:** Ann Johnson proposes a communications committee which will govern the I.O.U.'s presence on social media and the listserv, as well as with other future/emerging platforms to include Twitter, Facebook, and others. This would begin as an ad hoc committee and eventually be integrated into our committee structure.

**Meetings:** Vice-president Dennis Thompson delivered a report on last autumn's meeting in Fort Madison. I.O.U. made a profit of nearly \$400 on this meeting, largely due to keynoter Ty Smedes' refusal of an honorarium for his outstanding presentation on South Georgia Island and Antarctica. Approximately 66 members were in attendance. The upcoming autumn meeting will be held in the Spencer/Spirit Lake area of northwestern Iowa. Lee Schoenewe will assist with the planning and coordination for this event, to be held 26-28 August 2016. The keynote speaker will be Kevin Carlson of New Jersey, an author and authority on shorebirds and birding by GSS. Next spring's meeting is still in the early planning stages.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** Steve Dinsmore

offered the group an update on this important project. Progress had ground to a halt for a time, but recently much has been happening behind the scenes. Species accounts are almost completed, and Steve has been in conversation with publishers. Steve reports that much will be happening in the coming months.

**CyHawk Birding Challenge:** Rick Hollis apprised the group of Iowa City Bird Club's recent victory over Big Bluestem Audubon in this annual big day event. The esteemed *Jim Dinsmore-Tom Kent Trophy* was awarded and remained on display for the weekend. Members were informed that anyone can form a team and register and bird anywhere in Iowa for 24 hours. Interested birders may consult Rick or Eric Ollie for rules and further details.

**Nominating Committee:** Doug Harr shared the slate created by the committee:

**Treasurer:** Mary Beth Hunt, continuing

**Secretary:** Rex Rundquist, replacing outgoing secretary Stuart Sparkman

**Directors:** Candace Havelly and Tyler Harms, continuing; Eric Ollie, new.

A motion was heard by Hank Zaletel to elect the entire slate by acclamation, and the motion was seconded by Julie Johnston. Through a voice vote the body approved the slate by unanimous consent.

Ann Johnson moved to adjourn. Frederick Ruckersfeldt seconded, and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stuart Sparkman, secretary

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board of Directors Meeting

13 May 2016

The I.O.U. spring board meeting was held at Quality Inn and Suites in Ames, IA. President Francis Moore called the meeting to order at 8:11 P.M. Attending were vice-president Dennis Thompson, secretary Stuart Sparkman, treasurer Mary Beth Hunt, and directors at large Gerald White, Karen Viste-Sparkman, Linda Rudolph, and Tyler Harms. Attending as guests were Eric Ollie, Ann Johnson, Hank Zaletel, Doug Harr, Rex Rundquist, and Paul Skrade.

### REPORTS

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes from the August and November Board of Directors meetings have been published in *Iowa Bird Life*. Tyler Harms moved to approve the minutes as published, and Dennis Thompson seconded. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Beth Hunt gave the directors a brief summary of our financial status. Profit/loss and balance sheet comparisons were presented. Projects money has been released to general fund. A generous bequest from the estate of I.O.U. member Tom Lawson has been received and

allocated to projects in Dallas County, in accord with his wishes. The board advised Mary Beth regarding budget categories from which to disburse funds for various debits. Under the category of liabilities some fund balances were reorganized in the interests of efficiency.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Membership Committee:** Paul Skrade reported on behalf of the committee. The members recommend that I.O.U. no longer accumulate apparel and other branded items in favor of guided purchases via the internet. Also, it is recommended that the *electronic only publications* membership option be universally available rather than to young birders only. This policy will cut down on our consumption of paper, and reduce the biggest single cost we have in our budget. It's important for printing cost purposes that the organization retain at least 200 members who choose to receive hard copies of publications. Some discussion followed about membership levels and their costs.

Tyler Harms made a motion which would eliminate the Bluebird level of membership, and make the base membership a household membership. Additionally, the motion would set the *electronic only publications* membership dues at \$25 and *hard copy publications* membership at \$35, effective for memberships beginning 1 January 2017. Linda Rudolph seconded. Motion carried.

Ann Johnson informed the group about a system which allows an automatic renewal option through PayPal, which has been used effectively by Colorado Field Ornithologists. No action was taken at this time.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** The status of the project is unknown. A brief report is anticipated at tomorrow's business meeting.

**Projects Committee:** Candace Havelly has completed her term, and the committee

recommends Joe Jungers as a replacement. Tyler Harms moved for approval, and Karen Viste-Sparkman seconded. Motion carried.

There have been multiple recent incidents of grants awarded by the projects committee, followed by a recipient losing the check. I.O.U. has absorbed fees related to a check reissue. The board decided that hereafter if such a check is lost, the replacement check will be issued at an amount reduced by the amount of bank fees. It was reiterated that it is I.O.U. policy that grants awarded through the projects committee will not to be used to pay indirect costs.

Stickers crediting I.O.U. for sponsorship of projects have been produced and will be presented to the membership at large at the general business meeting. Small signs carrying the I.O.U. logo have also been distributed. Grant recipients have already been sending to us photos of the signs or stickers on items and structures funded by the organization.

The committee extended the grant deadline earlier this year with the board's permission, which achieved the objective of receiving more applications. This year the I.O.U. fully funded nine projects and partially funded four others, for total grants of \$9,273 awarded. The Lawson bequest paid for a Purple Martin house project and partially funded the purchase of a set of field guides.

Story County Conservation Board has planned an invasive species conference for 2017, to be held in Iowa for the first time. I.O.U. has been asked for a sponsorship. The Projects Committee voted not to do so, but thought the board may wish to consider a sponsorship. The matter was discussed, but no donation was approved.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Meetings:** Vice-president Dennis

Thompson delivered a report on last autumn's meeting in Fort Madison. I.O.U. made a profit of nearly \$400 on this meeting, largely due to keynoter Ty Smedes' refusal of an honorarium for his outstanding presentation on South Georgia Island and Antarctica. The upcoming autumn meeting will be held in the Spencer/Spirit Lake area of northwestern Iowa. Lee Schoenewe will assist with the planning and coordination for this event, to be held 26-28 August 2016. The keynote speaker will be Kevin Carlson of New Jersey, an author and authority on shorebirds and birding by GSS. Ideas about next spring's meeting were shared. Lucas County, which is hosting an inaugural birding festival the weekend of 21 May 2016, was raised as a possible site, and Osceola was considered as a base of operations. It has been requested that I.O.U. either hold its meeting in conjunction with the same Lucas County event next year or, if the meeting is to be held at a different site, that I.O.U. not schedule its spring meeting on the same weekend. There has also been some casual discussion of a meeting in the Dubuque area.

**Library/Historical Committee:** Hank Zaletel announced a bequest from the estate of Cal and Bernie Knight consisting of ten boxes of books, many photographs in the form of slides, a set of birding records, and some vintage cameras. The cameras have been sold, and the birding records and slides have been sent to the archives. The books are available to the general membership in this spring's silent auction. Iowa State University wishes to digitize parts of the I.O.U. archive for online access at no cost to our organization, and seeks the board's permission to do so. Dennis Thompson moved for approval, and Karen Viste-Sparkman seconded. Motion carried.

Ann Johnson repeated a request that the board form a communications commit-

tee to be in charge of social media and the listserv as well as quick memos to members, intended to strengthen the bond between the organization and its members. She suggested that this begin as an ad hoc committee with members appointed by the president. Ann currently works with other states that do this and they all are having more success with membership than our organization. President Moore stated that he will seek out some people to get this project started.

There was a brief discussion whether I.O.U. should set a minimum balance for its treasury, and use this benchmark to decide when to increase contributions to projects and when to cut back on expenses. No action was taken by the board at this time.

**Records Committee:** Chair Paul Hertz-el was not present. It was reported that not enough people are reporting their sightings. It has been suggested that a communications committee could follow up on sighting reports. This topic was tabled due to the lateness of the hour.

**Events Committee:** Eric Ollie offered a brief report regarding I.O.U. organized field trips. There were 23 participants in a recent trip to the Shimek State Forest area, which was deemed a success despite dodgy weather. The next field event is scheduled for 18 June at Yellow River State Forest. There was a brief discussion about insurance liability at such events. No action was taken at this time.

**Nominating Committee:** Paul Roisen shared the slate created by the committee:

**Treasurer:** Mary Beth Hunt, continuing  
**Secretary:** Rex Rundquist, replacing outgoing secretary Stuart Sparkman

**Directors:** Candace Havely and Tyler Harms, continuing; Eric Ollie, new.

A motion to adjourn was made by Stuart Sparkman. Karen Viste-Sparkman seconded,



and the motion carried. The board of directors meeting was adjourned at 10:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stuart Sparkman, secretary

## **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

The lead article in the March 1966 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* is the annual report of the Christmas Bird Count. An all-time high of 110 species was found on the 28 counts, two more than the old record. Davenport again had the most species with 72 and Clinton had the next highest total among counts in Iowa with 58 species. A total of 18 species of waterfowl were found indicating much open water at the time of the count. Probably the best find was a Great Black-backed Gull on the Davenport count but in Moline, Illinois. Other good finds included an Eared Grebe and Turkey Vulture at Cedar Rapids, a total of more than 1,000 Common Redpolls at various counts, and two Bohemian Waxwings at Estherville. It was also a fairly good year for Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches.

The annual report of bird banding in Iowa included summaries of reports from 17 banders who banded a total of 20,423 birds of 181 species. More than 1,000 individuals of four species (Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Mourning Dove, and Dark-eyed Junco) were banded with the 4,536 Blue-winged Teal the most. Among others the 791 Black-crowned Night-Herons and 26 Eared Grebes that were banded were amazing totals. I suspect there must be an interesting story there.

Because the last issue of 1965 was the 5-year index, this issue included field reports for fall 1965 and winter 1965-66. Among interesting finds were two reports of Greater Prairie-Chickens in southwestern Iowa in November, a King Rail at Goose Lake near Jefferson in January, and scattered reports of Evening Grosbeaks.

Fred Pierce provided a short article on Greater Prairie-Chickens during pioneer days in Buchanan County. One story involved a hunter who shot 337 chickens in 13 hours, a feat hard to imagine. Other stories described how the birds were trapped and stored before being shipped off to market. A short note by Mrs. Darrell Hanna described finding three Burrowing Owls on the Sioux City airport in July 1965.

Finally, among the book reviews, a number of publications with ties to Iowa and Iowans were reviewed. A lengthy booklet co-authored by I.O.U. member Dennis Carter of Decorah described the birds of Zion National Park in Utah. Two lengthy booklets published by the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation and written by Ames native John Madson provided extensive accounts of the natural history of Ring-necked Pheasants and Mallards. Three other booklets, also published by Olin Mathieson, were written by former I.O.U. President Ed Kozicky and described various aspects of wildlife management.

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**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

**IOU News Co-editors:** John and Anna Bissell, 328 SE Cedarwood Drive, Grimes, IA50111-1143 (John.annabissell@gmail.com)

**IOU WEB SITE:** <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

**IOWA RBA:** John Bissell ([john.annabissell@gmail.com](mailto:john.annabissell@gmail.com))

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 1813 Liberty Lane, Coralville, IA 52241 ([cjcaster@q.com](mailto:cjcaster@q.com)).

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Subscribe at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Update your on-line profile at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)> or send address and e-mail changes to Membership Coordinator Cecille Thompson, 7503 Wildflower Ct., Johnston, IA 50131 ([cnthomps@acm.org](mailto:cnthomps@acm.org)).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Fall: 26–28 August 2016, Spirit Lake.

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Brown Booby, Red Rock Reservoir, *Marion*, 3 September 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Townsend's Warbler, Center L, *Dickinson*, 22 August 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hopers, IA.

DESIGN: Marshall Desktop Publishing Inc., Evergreen, CO

GRAPHICS: Richard Beachler, Boone, IA

PRINTER: Centennial Printing, Louisville, CO





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# IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION





## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION (Dates indicate end of current term):

**President:** Francis L. Moore (2017), 336 Fairfield St, Waterloo, IA 50703-1628 (flmoore@forbin.net)

**Vice President:** Dennis Thompson (2017), 7503 Wildflower Ct. Johnston, IA 50131 (cndthomps@acm.org)

**Secretary:** Stuart Sparkman (2016), 3925 Hillcrest, Des Moines, IA 50310 (kingbird@mchsi.com)

**Treasurer:** Mary Beth Hunt (2016), 1201 High Avenue West, Oskaloosa, IA 52577 (birders@mahaska.org and iou@mahaska.org)

**DIRECTORS:** Tyler Harms (2016), Candace Havely (2016), Linda Rudolph (2017), Karen Viste-Sparkman (2016), Gerald White (2017).

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**Winter** (Dec, Jan, Feb; deadline 3 March): Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield Street, Waterloo, IA 50703 (flmoore@forbin.net)

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**Fall** (Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov; deadline 3 December): Paul Hertzell, 1432 East State Street, Mason City, IA 50401 (phertzell@rconnect.com)

**History Editor:** Thomas H. Kent, 1 Oaknoll Court, Iowa City, IA 52246 (thkent@gmail.com)

### STANDING COMMITTEES AND CHAIRPERSONS:

**Library/Historical:** Hank Zaletel (2018), 1928 6th Street, Nevada, IA 50201 (madowl@midiaowa.net); Candace Havely (2020)

**Membership:** Paul Skrade (2017) 205 5th Ave., Decorah 52101 (skradepa@gmail.com); Cecille Thompson Membership Coordinator (N/A); Karen Disbrow (2019); Douglas Harr (2019); Rick Hollis (2017); Eric Ollie (2020); Matt Stephenson (2018)

**Projects:** Candace Havely (2016), 3844 West 4th St., Unit 1, Waterloo, IA 50701 (candace69001@gmail.com); Tyler Harms (2017); John McCecil (2018); Billy Reiter-Marolf (2019)

**Publications:** Ann M. Johnson, 5362 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211 (aj@hologrambirds.com); James J. Dinsmore (2018); Stephen J. Dinsmore; John Bissell; William Scheible (2019)

**Records:** Paul Hertzell (Secretary, appointed by committee), 1432 E State St., Mason City, IA 50401 (phertzell@rconnect.com); Jay Gilliam (2017); Ann M. Johnson (2018); Matthew C. Kenne (2016); W. Bill Scheible (2019); Paul Skrade (2021); Karen Viste-Sparkman (2020)

# Meet Two Iowa Birders—Stuart Sparkman and Karen Viste-Sparkman

*Bob Cecil*

Stuart Sparkman and Karen Viste-Sparkman's route to Iowa was circuitous, crossing the continent and halfway back again to settle in Iowa. Karen was born in a suburb of Philadelphia where her father was an agronomist for a chemical company but at age nine moved to southern Idaho so her parents could realize their dream of owning a farm. She was not happy to leave but was bribed, successfully, by her parents who told her that by moving she could get a pet lamb. Her parents honored the promise and also added goats, cattle, and a horse to their 300-acre property. It would have been difficult for Karen to avoid an interest in nature. Her parents and sisters were "classification enthusiasts," compelled to identify every plant, creature, and mineral they encountered, and there was a lot to encounter in the high desert sagebrush and lava rock country surrounding them – Long-billed Curlews, Burrowing Owls, Loggerhead Shrikes, Mountain Bluebirds, Black-tailed Jackrabbits, Coyotes, Badgers, and the occasional Mule Deer wandering through plus the area's rocks and plants. Karen was infected by the identification bug. "One time I realized



*Karen Viste-Sparkman and Stuart Sparkman, Machu Picchu, Urubamba Province, Peru, 18 July 2015. Photograph by Jose Antonio Padilla Reyes, Cuzco, Peru.*

that all ducks on the pond were not the same,” she notes, which set off another flurry of identification fever.

Stuart was also an East Coast native, born in New Jersey, the son of a Methodist minister. Soon his family moved to Delhi in upstate New York where dairy cattle outnumbered people and the region’s favorite recreational pursuits included deer hunting, trout fishing, and maple sugaring. It was here that he developed an interest in the plants and animals of the forests of the Catskills although birds were not yet his focus. Stuart’s cross-continent move resulted from his acceptance at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He went reluctantly. “I was an East Coast kid and I wanted to stay there, but academic scholarships made it almost free for me to go to Oregon and it was a good university,” he explained. It was also an excellent place to experience the region’s famous birding spectacles as he learned when some friends took him on a weekend birding trip to the Klamath Basin. Bald Eagles were still rather uncommon in the lower 48 states then, but the country’s largest winter concentration of them was along the Klamath River where hundreds of Alaskan birds hunted for waterfowl over the refuge complex. “I didn’t see these where I grew up so it was a memorable experience for me,” he remarked. Later in this trip, while looking at marsh birds with his friends at Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, someone slammed the car door and more than 10,000 Snow Geese that they hadn’t spotted took off in unison, blackening the sky. “That was my hook moment. That’s when I became a birder.”

Karen also went to Willamette University, starting a year after Stuart, but despite their common interest in nature they did not meet academically but because their dorm rooms were three doors apart. Karen earned her undergraduate degree in biology while Stuart earned his in mathematics and psychology. They got married the day before Karen graduated.

Stuart began pursuing his Master’s degree in teaching secondary math while starting a teaching career that has thus far spanned 22 years in Oregon and ten more at Ames High School in Iowa. In the meantime, Karen began her career doing biology field work projects whose sites included coastal Alabama and Louisiana, Arizona, Washington, and Oregon. Maui, Hawaii was also a notable research experience, where she had to be delivered to the rugged and remote study site by helicopter to monitor the critically endangered Maui Parrotbill. Stuart came to visit Karen at most of these research sites including Hawaii, adding a few species to his list, though missing the rarer native honeycreepers. Of some compensation, however, was seeing a Brambling that visited Portland that winter while Karen was away. Their life lists remain only a very few species apart.

After building her resume with field work, Karen began her graduate study at Oregon State University where she eventually received her Master’s degree in wildlife science while working for the federal government as a biological science technician. After about 25 years together in Oregon, Karen accepted a position with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and began 2006 as refuge biologist. Stuart joined her in Iowa when his school year ended, accepting a position teaching mathematics at Ames High School. “Every day is different at Neal Smith,” Karen says of her job. “I do wildlife and plant surveys, collect and plant prairie seeds, work with volunteers and staff, whatever needs to be done.” She adds that the refuge’s namesake and former U.S. Congressman Neal Smith, now 96, stops by once a month or so.

“We are equally interested in birds. The majority of couples we know in the birding community seem to have one partner that is more intense about it, but we are both fascinated.” says Stuart. “We learn from each other, and rely on each other’s strengths.” Their first “flying trip” just to bird was to Southeastern Arizona. “It was a dream trip,” recalled Karen. “We had the original ABA Lane Guide and got over 40 life species including Greater Roadrunner, Painted Redstart, Red-faced Warbler, Elegant Trogon, and Strickland’s Woodpecker. We were kind of broke so we camped out. After that trip we were hooked on vacation birding.” Since then their international birding vacations have taken them to Mexico three times (Northeastern Mexico, Oaxaca, and Colima/Jalisco) where they found Steve Howell’s [A Bird-Finding Guide to Mexico](#) invaluable. Other wonderful birding destinations have included Trinidad and Tobago, Ecuador, South Africa, Bolivia, Machu Picchu, and incomparable Australia, where they were dazzled by huge Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, delightful Fairy Penguins, the stately Australian Bustard, and the stunning Superb Lyrebird. “All of our trips were amazing; each one somehow eclipsed the one before it.” Stuart’s “traveler’s Spanish” helps them in their Latin American trips, and they look forward to more explorations in the Neotropics. Asia is the next frontier they hope to explore.

For Stuart, seasickness is a big impediment to doing pelagic trips. “If I went out on a boat and got seasick, it wouldn’t be good to have a gun with me. One time we were only two miles off the Oregon coast but the seas were rough and I got really sick. I could still see the shore and I thought ‘I could swim that, and if I can’t, well that’s o.k.’” Karen is fortunate not to suffer this malady. One pelagic reward, however, was on a trip in the South Atlantic off the Cape of Good Hope. As Karen recalls, “We thought we had a Wandering Albatross, which was rare, but subsequent expert opinions from photographs identified it as an Amsterdam Albatross, one of the rarest birds in the world with a total population of about 130 birds. We had witnessed a first South African record!”

Karen and Stuart have also visited all fifty U.S. states and most Canadian provinces but their single favorite birding spot is Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, where they made an annual pilgrimage when they lived in Oregon. This is also the site of the infamous “occupation” in early 2016. Dominated by majestic Steens Mountain and centered on the Blitzen Valley, this refuge is an important high desert oasis for migrating birds in the Great Basin. Malheur has produced some 320 species of birds and hosts huge numbers of migrating waterfowl. One of Stuart’s regrets is that his teaching schedule prevents them from visiting some traditional hotspots during the productive spring and fall migrations. “I’m looking forward to retirement,” he adds. Trips they would like to take include destinations in Asia, including Bhutan, Vietnam, India, and Thailand, as well as return trips to South America, Australia, and Africa.

Karen and Stuart also give back to birding and the environment. Since joining the IOU in 2007, they have both served on the Board of Directors – Stuart as Secretary – and Karen is currently a member of the Iowa Ornithological Records Committee. They also do a Breeding Bird Survey in Page and Fremont County, Karen compiles the Neal Smith CBC and is on the Breeding Bird Atlas Steering Committee. They are also members of the Nature Conservancy, American Bird Conservancy, American Birding Association, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Oregon Natural Desert Association, and Des Moines Audubon. While still in Oregon they gathered data for a breeding bird atlas project, and both

authored species accounts for *Birds of Oregon: A General Reference* published by Oregon State University Press.

Karen and Stuart's home reflects both their passion for birds and their appreciation of the places they visit. It's situated along a wooded ravine; massive burr oaks adorn their yard and attract many birds, and a big picture window provides a panoramic view of their backyard and feeders. On a recent evening a Coyote trotted nonchalantly across the yard. Some of their most memorable yard list additions include Golden-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, nesting Broad-winged Hawks, and an unexpected Merlin. They don't quite remember the yard list number but it's around one hundred species. Their home features bird art and photos, and curios from their many trips are displayed on diminishing available shelf space.

Karen and Stuart point out that there are not a lot of birding couples in Iowa, couples who equally share an interest in birding, so if you find one of them out birding, you're probably going to find both of them. We're fortunate that this couple has migrated several thousand miles to get here.

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# Field Reports—Winter 2015–2016

*Francis L. Moore*



*Francis L. Moore*

## WEATHER

This winter season had above normal temperatures in December and February and below normal temperatures in January with below normal precipitation during the first month and above normal precipitation during the last two months of the season. There were several rain/snow events during December with the heaviest snowstorm starting on 31 January. The bulk of the precipitation in February fell as snow and came in two events.

Unseasonably warm weather was the rule through all of December. Temperature extremes for the month ranged from highs of 64 degrees in Donnellson and Keokuk on the 12th while Sheldon, Sioux Center and Spencer recorded the lowest temperatures with -6 degree readings on the morning of the 31st. There were five days (10th, 12th,

13th, 14th, and 23rd) during the month when temperatures exceeded 60 degrees somewhere in the state while only two days (3rd and 31st) brought sub-zero readings. A storm system brought heavy snow to far northwest Iowa on the last day of November with light rain and snow persisting over much of Iowa into the first two days of December. Another storm system brought widespread rain on the 23rd with some central and northeast Iowa locations receiving over an inch of rain. A Christmas Eve storm system brought snow from southwest, through central and into northeast Iowa. Heavy snow fell from Council Bluffs to Ames with 14 inches reported at Persia in Harrison County. Finally, another large storm system brought winter precipitation to much of Iowa on the 28th into the morning of the 29th. Heavy snow fell across the northern one-third of Iowa where 6 to 10 inch amounts were common. Meanwhile copious amounts of sleet and freezing rain fell over much of east central and southeast Iowa. The statewide average snowfall was 9.8 inches or 1.5 inches above normal and ranks as the 29th highest December total among 129 years of records. Temperatures averaged 10 degrees above normal and this ranks as the 7th warmest December among 143 years of records.

The new year opened with eight consecutive days of above normal temperatures, continuing the mild pattern that persisted through the last one-third of 2015. A brief period of cold weather prevailed from the 9th through the 13th. Daytime high temperatures reached

only -4 degrees at Elkader and Northwood on the 10th while morning lows fell to -18 degrees at Spencer on the 10th and at Northwood on the 11th. A brief warm-up occurred on the 14th and 15th with Lamoni recording the month's highest temperature with a 56 degree reading on the 14th. This was soon followed by the coldest weather of January on the 17th and 18th. Spencer recorded a minimum temperature of -21 degrees on the morning of the 17th along with a wind chill index of -42 degrees. Temperatures were above normal in most areas from the 21st through the end of the month with no subzero readings recorded in the state after the 20th. Precipitation was frequent during January, but in sharp contrast to November and December did not amount to much. About two-thirds of the month's precipitation came in the form of rain from the 6th to the 9th. Otherwise there were numerous light accumulations of snow through the remainder of January but only one event, on the 19th, brought more than four inches of snow to any single location when Mount Ayr accumulated 5.1 inches. The statewide average snowfall was 3.7 inches and ranks as the 19th least snowy January among 129 years of records.

Bitter cold weather made a relatively brief appearance in Iowa during February with subzero temperatures reported on only the 4th, 5th, and 10th through 13th. Temperatures were above average every day from the 15th through the end of the month with only a handful of locations seeing reading dip below 20 degrees during the second one-half of February. Cresco reported the month's lowest temperatures with a -17 degree reading on the morning of the 13th. Temperatures reached 73 degrees at Shenandoah and Sidney on the 18th while Sidney reached 75 degrees on the 27th. The late-month warmth also melted most of the snow cover that had persisted over northern Iowa since December 28. Heavy snow fell across the northwest one-half of the state with greatest amounts of 14.0 inches at Washta, 13.6 inches at Akron and 13.5 inches at Sheldon. There were very frequent light snow/or rain events between the 3rd and 21st. The largest of these events came on the 13th-14th when 2 to 4 inches of snow fell over much of the northeast one-half of the state. Wind gusts in the 50 to 60 mph range were common statewide on the 19th with Iowa City Airport reporting the highest gust at 63 mph. Overall monthly precipitation totals were well below normal over east central and southeast Iowa and well above normal over the northwest. February precipitation totals varied from 0.20 inches at Williamsburg to 1.92 inches at Sheldon. Monthly snowfall totals varied from only 1.3 inches at Clarinda to 23.4 inches at Sheldon. Snow totals have been well above normal in three of the past four months in northwest Iowa.

Temperatures over the mid-winter months of December, January and February averaged above normal while precipitation totals were nearly double the seasonal norm. This ranks as the wettest and the 17th warmest winter among 143 years of records. Despite slightly below normal precipitation in January and February these two months brought enough precipitation when combined with December's record total to easily surpass the 1914-15 winter for the wettest on record.

## GENERAL TRENDS

A number of waterfowl reports were from December and January with the majority from February. It appears that migration got underway with highest numbers coming after 18 February. There were even a few reports of Tundra Swan during the period. Diving

duck numbers were about average during the period with most reports from the end of the period. All three scoter species plus Long-tailed Duck made a showing during the period.

Most gallinaceous bird numbers were still on the low side with only Wild Turkey showing average or above totals and only two reports of Bobwhite, indicating that this family is still not doing very well in the state. American White Pelicans were found in good numbers at Red Rock Reservoir and at the locks and dams along the Mississippi River throughout the period. There were multiple late winter reports of Turkey Vulture this year beginning on 20 February. Bald Eagles were found in good numbers along the Mississippi River and at the Army Corps of Engineer impoundments. Reports of *Accipiters* were still low this season with below average numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks found and a lower than usual number of Cooper's Hawks again this winter. Northern Shrike numbers were found in good numbers throughout the state.

Gull reports were widespread in all three months. For northern owl species Snowy Owls were found in normal numbers again this year and there were good numbers of Northern Saw-whet Owls at the usual locations, Long-eared and Short-eared owls made a number of appearances in December and January. Merlins were widely reported but only a few Peregrine and Prairie falcons were noted.

Fair numbers of Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings were found during all three months, mostly in the northern and central parts of the state; Smith's Longspurs appeared the last two days of February. Yellow-rumped Warbler numbers were down when compared to previous years. There were good numbers of wintering sparrows throughout the period. Blackbirds made a good showing starting around 20 February, but few overwintered. Winter finch numbers this winter were up this year from last year with reports of both species of crossbills along with good numbers of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. Eurasian Tree Sparrows continue to expand their range with several found in Cedar, Lucas, and Black Hawk counties.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

The records committee accepted four records of casual and accidental species this winter: Harlequin Duck, Great Black-backed Gull, Say's Phoebe, and Pine Grosbeak.

## COMMENT

I really appreciate everyone submitting reports and providing material for this report. It was good to see nice details on some of the rarer species come with the documentations that were submitted. Please continue to provide these details for both rare and for common species on unusual dates. Without this information some species cannot be included in the report and an important reports might be left out of the records that should be included; only the person actually seeing the bird can provide such details. Details can be a short physical description of the bird that allows for separation from any similar species. For many species, this can be one sentence. It doesn't take much to point out the relevant features to give some confidence that the bird was seen well and properly identified. Please take the time to make yourself aware of when some of our species are out of season and take short notes to make sure of the record.

Please keep entering your records on the Iowa Ornithologists' Union website so that

they can continue to be added to the archives and be a part of our long-term database. There were a higher number of eBird records than usual in this report; these are listed with the name of the eBird reporters that were downloaded from the eBird database by Ann Johnson.

#### SPECIES DATA

ALL CAPS = Casual or Accidental. \* = documented, ph = photo. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **CBC** = Christmas bird count, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **R** = river, **SP** = state park, **SRA** = state recreation area, **WA** = wildlife area.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were a few records from December, January and early February with most showing up on or after 20 February. Highest numbers were 5,000 on Feb 26 at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FB), 4,000 on Feb 27 also at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FLR), and 5,000 on 27 Feb at Snyder Bend Park *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Snow Goose:** Highest numbers were 400,000 on 20 Feb at Riverton WMA *Fremont* (POR) with another 400,000 on the same day at Forney L *Fremont* (POR). Other reports included 200,000 on 23 Feb *Woodbury* (GLV) and 20,000 on 20 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (BCC, CRE).

**Ross's Goose:** There were 19 reports with a high of 54 on 21 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB); other nice totals were 42 on 21 Feb at Whitebreast RA, Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB) and 21 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**Cackling Goose:** There were 18 reports during the period with the highest of 200 on 11 Feb at MidAmerican Energy Ponds *Pottawattamie* (MS) and 200 on 21 Feb *Louisa* (GM).

**Canada Goose:** Flocks of several thousand were fairly common throughout the period at various locations around the state. The largest mid-winter concentrations were 12,700 on 31 Dec at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (ScD, SiD) and 15,000 on 13 Feb along Missouri R south of Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Mute Swan:** Five separate reports this year: 1 on 18 Dec-16 Jan at Carter L and Lake Manawa *Pottawattamie* (KG, BH, BP, POR, MW), 2-4 on 27 Dec-28 Feb at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (PF, FLR), 2-5 on 7 Jan-27 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FB, BCC, JLF, SN, LGR, RAS), 1 on 31 Jan *Marshall* (AS), and 1 on 27 Feb at Raccoon River P *Polk* (POR).

**Trumpeter Swan:** There were 135 reports from around the state this year. Most were at Beemer's Pond *Hamilton* through the winter: 140 on 13 Dec (SJD) and 123 on 16 Jan (SJD). Another hot spot for this species was at Maffitt Res *Dallas* with high counts of 156 on 2 Jan (JG) and 142 on 13 Jan (DTh). High counts at other locations were 121 on 25 Feb Cone Marsh *Louisa* (SN) and 68 on 20 Feb at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB, RLC).

**Tundra Swan:** There were 25 reports with a high count of 9,000 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB); other nice totals were 500 on 8 Dec at Red Oak Rd *Allamakee* (DGE) and 46 on 20 Feb at Upper Mississippi R WMA, Green Island *Jackson* (BW).

**Wood Duck:** A late migrant was 1 on 18 Dec at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM). Other notable winter reports were 2 on 7 Jan at Trumpeter Marsh *Lee* (JLF), 1 on 15 Feb on Iowa R, Coralville *Johnson*

(MHB), and 1 on 20 Feb at Union Grove SP Marshall (MP).

**Gadwall:** Reported throughout the period. There were 15 reports in December with a peak of 107 on 22 Dec at John Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS), 25 reports in January with a peak of 68 on 18 Jan at Big Creek SP Polk (AB), and 8 reports in February with a peak of 235 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**American Wigeon:** There were 34 reports this year with a high of 100 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB), 10 on 1 Jan at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB), and 55 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**American Black Duck:** All reports were from east and central Iowa this season. High numbers were 4 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 2 on 9 Jan at Sycamore Access, Neal Smith Trail *Polk* (AB), and 2 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**Mallard:** The highest numbers reported were 4,878 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 1,700 on 30 Jan at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (POR), and 6,000 on 13 Feb *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Only one report 1 on 3-10 Dec at Goose L *Johnson* (BCC, details).

**Northern Shoveler:** Highest number reported: 133 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM). Other high numbers by month: 2 on 2 Jan at Coralville Res *Johnson* (MHB) and 60 on 27 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FLR).

**Northern Pintail:** There were 60 reports for the period. High counts were 23 on 19 Dec at Polk City WA, Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), 3 on 11 Jan at Credit Island P *Scott* (RAS), 3 on 31 Jan at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB), and 12,000 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**Green-winged Teal:** High counts by month were 180 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 7 on 1 Jan at Marsh Farm Wetland *Polk* (AB),

and 450 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**Canvasback:** A total of 38 reports were submitted with high counts of 21,000 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB), 16,200 on 18 Jan at Pool 19, Mississippi R *Lee* (SJD), and 14,000 on 18 Feb *Lee* (CO).

**Redhead:** High counts were 67 on 12 Dec *Dickinson* (JDJ), 87 on 26 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (POR), and 95 on 28 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (POR).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Highest numbers were 13,000 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB), 302 on 17 Dec at Mississippi R *Clinton* (KJM), and 500 on 18 Feb *Lee* (CO).

**Greater Scaup:** There were 23 reports this season with high counts of 97 on 18 Dec at Pool 19, Mississippi R *Lee* (SJD), 8 on 30 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 6 on 19-24 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC, AB).

**Lesser Scaup:** A total of 45 reports this winter. High counts: 5,000 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB), 795 on 17 Dec at Mississippi R *Clinton* (KJM), 2,840 on 30 Dec at John Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS), and 750 on 18 Jan *Lee* (CO).

**HARLEQUIN DUCK:** Two reports this winter, one without details, and 1 on 5 Feb at Des Moines R, Ottumwa *Wapello* (TNJ, MSt\*, VSt\*).

**Surf Scoter:** All: 1 on 1-8 Dec at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**White-winged Scoter:** All: 1 on 6-25 Dec at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (DGE) and 1 on 7 Jan at Pool 19, Mississippi R *Lee* (JLF).

**Black Scoter:** All: 1 on 6 Dec at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) and 1 on 6 Dec at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Long-tailed Duck:** All: 1 on 3 Dec L&D 9, Mississippi R *Allamakee* (JF), 5 (2 females and 3 juv males) on 6 Dec at Dav- enport *Scott* (TGS), 1 on 3 Jan at Red Rock



Res Marion (AB), 1 juv female on 18 Jan at L&D 19, Mississippi R Lee (SJD), 1 ad female on 18 Jan at Fort Madison Lee (SJD), and 1 ad female on 21 Feb at Red Rock Res Marion (SJD).

**Bufflehead:** There were 22 reports with highs of 300 on 6 Dec Allamakee (KB), 16 on 12 Dec Dickinson (JDJ), and 23 on 14 Dec at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC).

**Common Goldeneye:** High counts were 1,000 on 6 Dec Allamakee (KB), 800 on 15 Dec at John Deere Dike Dubuque (TM), 15,022 on 17 Dec at Mississippi R Clinton & Jackson (KJM), and 380 on 2 Jan Scott (POR).

**Hooded Merganser:** High counts: 122 on 8 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (DTh), 26 on 14 Dec at Rathbun Res Appanoose (RLC), 102 on 17 Dec at Mississippi R Jackson & Clinton (KJM), and 28 on 21 Feb at Saylorville Res Polk (JJM).

**Common Merganser:** There were 80 reports of this species. High counts: 960 on 19 Dec-9 Jan at Saylorville Res Polk (AB), 2,700 on 3 Jan Marion (AB), 3,750 on 3 Jan at Red Rock Res Marion (AB), and 1,750 on 21 Feb at Red Rock Res Marion (AB).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** There were 24 reports. Highest numbers were 24 on 3 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC), 25 on 5 Dec-3 Jan at Saylorville Res Polk (AB), and 11 on 20 Feb Fremont (POR).

**Ruddy Duck:** There were 21 reports with high counts of 3 on 20 Dec at Davenport Scott (KJM), 3 on 16 Jan-7 Feb at Johnston gravel pits Polk (AB, DTh), and 5 on 29 Feb at Cone Marsh Louisa (CRE).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Two reports: 9 on 21 Jan Ringgold (JRL) and 5 on 13 Feb at Mystic Appanoose (TNJ).

**Gray Partridge:** This year there were 23 reports, mostly from the north and east with highest numbers of 31 on 30 Jan at Lime Springs Howard (LR), 21 on 7 Feb

south of Waterloo Black Hawk (CL), and 28 on 13 Feb at Lime Springs Howard (LR).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** Only 11 reports with the following high counts: 25 on 11 Dec Muscatine (KJM), 61 on 5 Jan Hamilton (POR), 79 on 6 Jan Story (DCH), and 78 on 21 Jan-19 Feb at Oswego Wetland Complex Woodbury (POR, GLV).

**Ruffed Grouse:** None reported.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** One report: up to 19 on 21-23 Jan Ringgold (JRL, POR)

**Wild Turkey:** High: 97 on 23 Dec Buchanan (KJM) and 252 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM).

**Red-throated Loon:** Two reported: 1 on through 11 Dec at Red Rock Res Marion (JF) and 1 on 1 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

**Common Loon:** All: 2 on 5 Dec at Lake MacBride SP Johnson (MHB), 2-3 on 5-16 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (AB, RLC, DTh), 3 on 5 Dec at Red Rock Res Marion (MP), and 3 on 6 Dec at Spirit L Dickinson (LAS).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Nine reports, eight from the central and eastern part of the state and one from the west. Reports came from December (6), January (2), and February (1).

**Horned Grebe:** All: 1 on 1 Dec at Ada Hayden P Story (WO), 7 on 3 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (RLC), 1 on 4 Dec at Sunset Pond Des Moines (JLF), and 5 on 5 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (AB).

**Red-necked Grebe:** One report without details.

**Eared Grebe:** Two reports: 1 on 26 Dec-24 Jan at Marsh Farm Wetland Dallas (AB, m.ob.) and 1 on 30 Dec at Twelve Mile L Union (SJD, ph).

**Western Grebe:** One report of 1 on 1 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD, DTh).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** There were 38 reports in December and January



*American White Pelican, Polk, 9 December 2015. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.*



*Bald Eagle, Boone, 14 January 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

with high counts of 21 on 5 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 12 on 28 Feb at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (GM).

**American White Pelican:** There were an impressive 108 reports throughout the period, most below the dams at Saylorville Res *Polk* and Red Rock Res *Marion*. High counts were 365 on 19 Dec at Red Rock Res dam *Marion* (AB), 350 on 23 Jan at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AS), 210 on 30 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 105 on 27 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FLR).

**Great Blue Heron:** There were 21 reports submitted with high counts of 10 on 15 Dec at Mississippi R *Clinton* (KJM), 11 on 5 Jan at Credit Island P *Scott* (SN), 12 on 9 Feb at Mississippi R *Scott* (MM), and 12 on 11 Feb *Johnson* (AC).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One report: 1 on 12 Dec at Jordan Creek Mall, Des Moines *Polk* (Art Check, fide SJD).

**Turkey Vulture:** There were 39 reports this year, far more than usual for win-

ter. There were three reports from December with a high of 2 on 4 Dec *Des Moines* (JLF), two reports in January with 4 on 18 Jan *Lee* (SJD), and the rest in February with the first being 2 on 7 Feb *Clarke* (SJD) and high counts of 6 on 20 Feb at Cedar L *Linn* (BCC) and 17 on 26 Feb *Linn* (BR).

**Bald Eagle:** High counts on the Mississippi River included 41 on 16 Dec in *Clinton* (KJM) and 208 on 10 Jan in *Louisa* (KJM). High counts away from the Mississippi R were 178 on 17 Jan *Marion* (AB) and 833 on 21 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Northern Harrier:** There were 44 reports with highs of 7 on 18 Dec at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KJM) and 10 on 23 Jan at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AC).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** A total of 19 were reported, two from western Iowa, 12 in central Iowa, and five from *Clinton* and *Muscatine*.

**Cooper's Hawk:** A total of 24 were reported, all from the eastern and central





*Great Black-backed Gull, Red Rock Res, Marion, 28 February 2016. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*

parts of the state. Most reports were of single individuals with several records of 3 or 4 along the Mississippi R.

**Northern Goshawk:** All: 1 on 11 Jan at Kellerton Bird Conservation Area *Ringgold* (VMM) and 1 on 13 Feb *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Ten reports with highs of 2-3 on 2 Dec-26 Feb at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (LGR, POR, BVL) and 2 on 20 Feb *Waubonsie SP Fremont* (POR).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** There were 7 dark morph individuals reported this winter. High counts were 22 on 15 Dec *Clinton & Scott* (KJM), 21 on 17 Dec *Clinton & Jackson* (KJM), and 29 on 21 Dec *Muscatine & Louisa* (KJM).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** There were 33 reports totaling 45 individuals during the season. High counts: 3 on 3-4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM) and 4 on 13 Feb *Woodbury* (GLV). Only 3 dark morph individuals were reported.

**Golden Eagle:** All: 1 subadult on 1 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, ph), 1 on 15 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 1 imm on 4 Jan at Mississippi R *Clayton* (KJM), 1 on 20 Jan *Ringgold* (JRL), 1 imm on 27 Jan at Water-

man Creek Valley *O'Brien* (RLC, DTh), and 1 imm on 27 Jan at Kindlespire P/Burr Area *Clay* (LAS).

**Virginia Rail:** All: 1 on 4 Dec at Banner Flats WMA *Warren* was freshly dead (JS).

**American Coot:** There were 122 reports with highs of 500 on 6 Dec *Allamakee* (KB), 230 on 8 Dec at Red Oak Rd *Allamakee* (DGE), 2,050 on 12 Dec *Dickinson* (JDJ), 540 on 17 Dec at Mississippi R *Clinton* (KJM), 340 on 20 Dec *Dickinson* (JDJ), and 55-64 on 27-29 Feb at Cone Marsh *Louisa* (FLR, BCC).

**Sandhill Crane:** There were an amazing 35 reports this winter with high counts of 70 on 5 Dec at Pool Slough WMA *Allamakee* (LR), 63 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), and 13 on 27 Feb *Allamakee* (SH).

**Killdeer:** There were 59 reports with highs of 39 on 6 Dec at Easter L County P *Polk* (SJD) and 7 on 28 Feb at Big Marsh WA *Butler* (DGE).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Two reports: 1 on 2 Jan along Des Moines R Valley *Boone* (WO) and 1 on 27 Feb at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB).

**American Woodcock:** Four reports: 2

on 24-27 Feb *Jefferson* (DCP), 2 on 27 Feb at Willow Slough Mills (SJD), 1 on 28 Feb at Ames *Story* (SJD), and 3 on 29 Feb at Red Feather Prairie *Polk* (POR).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** The only report was 1 juv on 24-29 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD ph, AB, SA, PW).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** All: 2 on 4 Dec at Blackhawk Bottoms WMA *Des Moines* (JLF) and 1 on 14 Dec at Rathbun L *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Franklin's Gull:** All: 1 on 3 Dec at Ada Hayden Heritage P, Ames *Story* (WO), 1 on 7-8 Dec at Ames *Story* (SJD), and 1 on 17 Dec at Cedar L *Linn* (JF) were late fall migrants while 1 on 26-29 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF, RIA, PHA) was an early spring migrant.

**Ring-billed Gull:** There were 31 reports with high counts of 1,520 on 3 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), 3,000 on 20 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), 442 on 20 Dec at Davenport *Scott* (KJM), 2,700 on 1 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 5,500 on 28 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (POR).

**Herring Gull:** High counts: 260 on 31 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), 58 on 29 Jan at Cedar L *Linn* (BCC), and 116 on 21 Feb *Marion* (AB).

**Thayer's Gull:** All: up to 4 (2 ad and 2 juv) on 4 Dec-7 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (m.ob.), 1 ad on 9 Dec at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), 1 ad on 12 Dec at Boone County Landfill *Boone* (AB), 1 on 15-29 Feb at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), 1-3 on 21-22 Feb at L&D 14, Mississippi R *Scott* (JF), 2 on 26 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF), and 1-2 on 23-26 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JF, JG).

**Iceland Gull:** Five reports this winter: 1 2nd cycle on 2 Dec at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, BCC), 1 juv on 20 Dec-1 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, RLC, AB, ph, RT, DTh, JB), 1 2nd cycle on 29 Jan at L&D 14, Mississippi R *Scott* (JF, ph), 1 2nd cycle on

12 Feb at Cedar L *Linn* (JF) and 1 ad on 29 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, ph).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** This species was widely reported in gull flocks in central and eastern Iowa. The only exception to this pattern was 1 ad on 6 Dec at E Okoboji L *Dickinson* (LAS), a notable record at any season. At least 4 (1 ad, 1 4th cycle, 1 2nd cycle, 1 juv) were seen 8 Dec-10 Jan with 5 (2 ad, 1 3rd cycle, 1 2nd cycle, 1 juv) reappearing 23-29 Feb at Saylorville Res *Polk* (m.ob.). Farther downstream at least 2 (1 ad, 1 3rd cycle) were seen 21-28 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB, JF, POR). At Cedar L *Linn* 1 ad was present 26 Jan-1 Feb and a 3rd cycle appeared on 28 Feb (JF). One ad was notable on 19 Feb at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (LGR, MHB). The remaining reports were from the Mississippi R *Scott* and included 1 ad on 29 Jan (JF) and at least 3 individuals (1 ad, 1 3rd cycle, 1 juvenile) from 21-27 Feb (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** Four reports: 1 juv on 1 Dec-10 Jan at Saylorville Res *Polk* (m.ob.), 1 juv on 11 Dec-9 Jan at Red Rock Res/Runnels Overlook *Marion & Warren* (JF, SJD), 1 2nd cycle on 9 Jan at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), and 1 juv on 21 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB, SJD, POR).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:** A rare find away from the Mississippi R was 1 ad on 28 Feb at Red Rock Res *Marion* (POR\*, RIA, PHA).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Highest counts were 59 on 24 Jan at Brenton Feedlot *Dallas* (AB) and 79 on 12 Feb *Woodbury* (POR).

**Mourning Dove:** There were 17 reports this winter with high counts of 93 on 20 Dec Davenport *Scott* (KJM), 68 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), and 65 on 13 Feb at Sycamore Access, Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Eleven reports for this presumably common nocturnal



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*, Iowa City, Johnson, 19 January 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.



*Hairy Woodpecker*, Lake MacBride SP, Johnson, 12 December 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

species with a high of 12 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM).

**Great Horned Owl:** There were 16 reports of a total of 63 individuals of this common species. High was 17 on 4 Jan Clayton (KJM).

**Snowy Owl:** There were 22 reports: 1 juv on 5 Dec Appanoose (TNJ), 1 on 9 Dec Franklin (KTM), 1 ad on 11 Dec Cerro Gordo (BVL), 1 juv on 20 Dec Dallas (SJD, JB), 1 juv on 25 Dec Kossuth (SJD), 1 juv on 25 Dec at Dean Appanoose (TNJ), 1 juv on 5-12 Jan Hamilton (Andrew Spiker *fide* SJD, SJD) 1 juv on 5 Jan Wright (CW, EL), 1 ad on 10 Jan Palo Alto (SJD), 1 juv on 13 Jan Kossuth (SJD), 1 ad on 14 Jan Webster (Andrew Spiker *fide* SJD), 1 juv on 14 Jan

Cerro Gordo (BVL), 1 on 16 Jan Pottawattamie (MTW), 3 on 18 Jan Howard (LR), 1 juv on 19 Jan O'Brien (RSM), 1 juv on 26 Jan north of Ottosen Kossuth (SJD), 1 juv on 31 Jan SW of West Bend Palo Alto (SJD), 1 on 13 Dec near Lime Springs Howard (LR) and 1 ad on 13 Feb Humboldt (JN).

**Barred Owl:** There were 14 reports of this common species during the period. High was 7 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: 5 on 18 Dec Johnson (AC), 1 on 19 Dec at Lime Creek Conservation Area Cerro Gordo (PH), 2 on 4 Jan at Clayton (KJM), 1 on 5 Jan Martin Lake Black Hawk (POR), 1 on 9 Jan at Oak Grove County P Sioux (POR), 6-7 on 21-25



*American Kestrel*, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 23 January 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Prairie Falcon*, Buena Vista, 3 January 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Jan at John Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS, TM, CK), 1 on 29 Jan at Maynes Grove *Franklin* (BVL), 2 on 25 Feb at Crawford Creek RA *Ida* (POR), and 1 on 27 Feb at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (MP).

**Short-eared Owl:** All: 2 on 18 Dec at Green Island WMA *Jackson* (KJM), 1-2 on 30 Dec at Moeckley Prairie *Polk* (AB, RLC), 1-7 on 7-20 Jan at Hawkeye WMA *Johnson* (JF, MHB, JLF, BR), 1 on 11 Jan at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc), and 2 on 21-27 Jan at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (POR).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** All: 1 on 19 Dec at Lime Creek Conservation Area *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 1-2 on 22 Jan-29 Feb at Moorehead Pioneer P *Ida* (POR, DHa, SL), 1 on 3 Jan at Grammer Grove County P *Marshall* (MP), 1 on 4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), 1 on 22 Jan at *Polk* (RLC), 1 on 23 Jan at Lime Creek Nature Center *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), and 1 on 23 Feb *Warren* (Craig Cutts *vide* SJD).

**Belted Kingfisher:** A total of 15 reports of 30 individuals with a high count of 6 on 4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** There were 20 reports this winter. High: 35 on 15 Dec *Clinton & Scott* (KJM).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** There were 20 reports with a high of 40 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** All: 1 on 6 Dec *Fayette* (KTM), 1 on 15 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 3 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 1 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 2 on 18 Dec *Jackson* (KJM), 1 on 19 Dec *Linn* (KJM), 1 on 21 Dec *Muscatine* (GW), 1 on 22 Dec at Ravine P *Woodbury* (POR), 1 on 28 Dec at *Humboldt Humboldt* (AB), 1 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM), 1 on 10 Jan at *Mystic Appanoose* (TNJ), and 1 on 12 Feb at Shimek State Forest, *Donnellson Unit Lee* (BT).

**Hairy Woodpecker:** There were 19 reports statewide with a high of 16 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).



*Northern Shrike*, Webster, 22 December 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*American Crow*, Iowa City, Johnson, 19 February 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

**Northern Flicker:** A total of 17 reports were submitted with high counts of 15 on 16 Dec at Syracuse WMA *Clinton* (KJM) and 16 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** A total of 33 reports of 51 individuals, all from the central and eastern sections of the state with a high of 4 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM).

**American Kestrel:** There were 18 reports of a total of 87 individuals. High counts were 10 on 17 Dec *Clinton* (KJM) and 21 on 21 Dec *Muscatine & Louisa* (KJM).

**Merlin:** A total of 23 were reported from 13 counties with a high of 3 on 20 Feb *Fremont* (POR). Of those reporting subspecies 4 were *columbarius* race and 3 were the *richardsonii* race.

**Peregrine Falcon:** All: 1 on 4 Dec *Lee* (JLF), 1 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM), 1 on 2 Jan at *Davenport Scott* (POR), 2 on 5 Jan *Scott* (JLF), 1 ad on 18 Jan at *Fort Madison Lee* (SJD), and 2 on 11 Feb at L&D 11, *Mississippi R Dubuque* (TM).

**Prairie Falcon:** All: 1 on 20 Dec west of *Farragut Fremont* (POR), 1 on 3 Jan *Buena Vista* (SJD, ph), and 1 on 18 Jan w of *DeSoto NWR Harrison* (POR).

**SAY'S PHOEBE:** One on 27 Dec at *Broken Kettle Grasslands Plymouth* (DS\*).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Only one report: 1 on 27 Feb at *Riverton WMA Fremont* (SJD).

**Northern Shrike:** There were 23 reports of 25 individuals this winter scattered over the northern two-thirds of the state.

**Black-billed Magpie:** All: 1-2 on 15-29 Feb at *Broken Kettle Grasslands Plymouth* (POR, DHa).

**Horned Lark:** There were 18 reports with a high of 1,500 on 14 Feb at *Errington Marsh WMA Polk* (JCe).

**Tree Swallow:** All: 1 on 27 Feb at *Riverton WMA Fremont* (SJD, details) was a record early spring arrival.

**Tufted Titmouse:** There were 21 reports with a high of 32 on 4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Only 15 reports of this species mostly from the northern and western areas of the state. High: 6 on 15 Dec at *Hampton Cemetery Franklin* (BVL) and 6 on 24 Jan-15 Feb *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**Brown Creeper:** There were 23 reports with 79 individuals included. The highest numbers were 12 on 18 Dec *Jackson*



*Red-breasted Nuthatch, Sheldon, O'Brien, 15 February 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*Brown Creeper, Sheldon, O'Brien, 13 January 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*

(KJM) and 12 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM). The westernmost record was 1 on 14 Feb Woodbury (GLV).

**Winter Wren:** All: 1-2 on 4-18 Dec at Cascade Ravine Des Moines (JLF, JWR), 1-2 on 19-22 Dec at Ravine P Woodbury (GLV, POR), 1 on 15 Dec Scott (KJM), 7 on 18 Dec Jackson (KJM), 1 on 20 Dec at Jester County P Polk (WO), 1 on 20 Dec at Davenport Scott (AJF), 1 on 2 Jan Muscatine (KJM), 5 on 4 Jan Clayton (KJM), and 2 on 5 Jan at Morgan Creek P Linn (JF).

**Marsh Wren:** All: 1 on 31 Dec-1 Jan at Harrier Marsh WMA Boone (LGD, ph).

**Carolina Wren:** There were 20 reports this season with a total of 40 individuals. Most reports were of 1 or 2 individuals, mostly from the southern and eastern parts of the state, with high counts of 7 on 14 Dec Lee (KJM) and 7 on 29 Feb at Fairmount Cemetery Scott (POR).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Fourteen reports this season, most of just 1-3 indi-

viduals. High counts were 4 on 14 Dec Lee (KJM) and 21 on 18 Dec Jackson (KJM).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** All: 1 on 18 Dec Jackson (KJM), 2 on 19 Dec Linn (KJM), 1 on 19-20 Dec at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (MHB), 1 on 1 Jan at Big Creek WMA Polk (AB), and 1 on 4 Jan at Mississippi R Clayton (KJM).

**Eastern Bluebird:** Thirty reports this year with high counts of 24 on 14 Dec at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC), 29 on 18 Dec Jackson (KJM), 23 on 20 Dec at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (MHB), and 21 on 26 Jan Polk (RLC).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** All: 1 on 3 Dec at Highway A26 Allamakee (JF) and 1 on 20 Jan at Ada Hayden Prairie P Story (WO).

**Hermit Thrush:** All: 2 on 11 Dec at Rathbun L Appanoose (TNJ), 1 on 14 Dec at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC), 3 on 19 Dec Linn (KJM), 1 on 19 Dec at Emma McCarthy Lee Memorial P, Ames Story (WO), 1 on 20 Dec at Big Creek SP Polk (KTM), 1



*Marsh Wren, Harrier M, Boone, 31 December 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Hermit Thrush, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 10 January 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

on 2 Jan at Sparks Cemetery Boone (LGD), and 1 on 10 Jan at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (MHB).

**American Robin:** Numbers were good this winter with high counts of 540 on 14 Dec at Rathbun L Appanoose (RLC) and 400 on 17 Feb at Decorah Winneshiek (LR).

**Varied Thrush:** None reported.

**Gray Catbird:** Two reports: 1 on 6 Dec at Hawkeye WMA Johnson (MHB) and 1 on 11 Dec Polk (RM).

**Brown Thrasher:** Two reports: 1 on 28 Dec south of West Bend Palo Alto (SB) and 1 on 13 Jan at Coralville Johnson (Laura Fuller, fide JLF).

**Northern Mockingbird:** All: 1 on 29 Feb near Grinnell Poweshiek (POR).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** None reported.

**Cedar Waxwing:** High counts were 300 on 12 Dec at Cedar L Linn (JE) and 302 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM).

**Lapland Longspur:** Sixteen reports with high counts of 570 on 20 Feb O'Brien

(JDJ) and 2,000 on 28 Feb e of Lake Park Dickinson (DAB).

**Smith's Longspur:** Early spring arrivals included 1 on 28 Feb at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt Polk (AB, JCe) and 50 on 29 Feb at Neal Smith NWR Jasper (KVS).

**Snow Bunting:** The largest flocks were 400 on 30 Jan and 275 on 13 Feb near Lime Springs Howard (LR).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** All: 1 on 3 Dec at Clear Lake Cerro Gordo (CW).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** Only seven reports this season with high counts of 7 on 18 Dec Jackson (KJM) and 7 on 24 Jan at Rathbun L Appanoose (TNJ).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 2 on 17 Dec-13 Feb at Gelita Gelatin Woodbury (POR).

**Eastern Towhee:** None reported.

**American Tree Sparrow:** High counts: 271 on 3 Jan Clayton (KJM), 444 on 23 Jan Ringgold (POR), and 287 on 13 Feb Woodbury (GLV).

**Chipping Sparrow:** The only report





*Song Sparrow*, Harrier M, Boone, 28 January 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*American Robin*, O'Brien, 29 January 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.

was 1 on 20 Jan at Greene *Butler* (BDB, ph).

**Field Sparrow:** All: 1 on 4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Vesper Sparrow:** All: 1 on 4 Jan at *Gilbertville Black Hawk* (DGE).

**Savannah Sparrow:** All: 1 on 20 Dec at *Davenport* (RAS) and 1 on 23 Jan *Decatur* (POR).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** All: 1 on 23 Jan *Decatur* (POR, details).

**Fox Sparrow:** All: 1 on 4 Dec at *Cascade Ravine Des Moines* (JLF) and 5 on 14 Dec at *Rathbun L Appanoose* (RLC).

**Song Sparrow:** There were 37 reports, mostly from the eastern and central parts of the state. High counts were 26 on 20 Dec *Davenport* (AJF) and 11 on 4 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** All: 1 on 1-3 Dec *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 1 on 6 Dec at *Hawkeye WMA Johnson* (MHB), 1 on 2 Jan-16 Feb at *DeSoto NWR Visitor Center Harrison* (POR, details).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Nine reports with high counts of 4 on 20 Dec *Davenport Scott* (AJF) and 12 on 20 Dec *Scott* (RAS).

**White-throated Sparrow:** There were

34 reports this winter. High counts were 53 on 14 Dec at *Lee* (KJM) and 24 on 20 Dec at *Davenport Scott* (KJM).

**Harris's Sparrow:** There were 23 reports with high counts of 17 on 23 Jan *Decatur* (POR) and 31 on 20 Feb at *Riverton WMA Fremont* (POR).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** There were 14 reports with high counts of 7 on 20 Dec at *Davenport Scott* (RAS) and 15 on 13 Feb *Des Moines* (DH).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Oregon race individuals included 1 on 1-2 Jan at *Johnston Polk* (AB, DTh), 1 on 2 Jan *Boone* (DHa), 2 on 7 Jan at *Swiss Valley Nature Preserve Dubuque* (TM), 1 on 26-28 Jan *Wickiup Hill Learning Center Linn* (JE), and 1 on 2-10 Feb *Polk* (AB).

**Dickcissel:** One report without details.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** High counts were 985 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM) and 50,000+ on 24-29 Feb at *Luton WMA, Owego Wetland Complex Woodbury* (GLV, POR).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** There were 3 reports but only the 4 on 29 Feb at *Neal*



*Pine Grosbeak, Sheldon, O'Brien, 6 February 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*White-winged Crossbill, Sheldon, O'Brien, 4 January 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*

Smith NWR Jasper (KVS) were heard calling.

**Western Meadowlark:** There were 40 reports this winter, and most were probably this species. However, the only reports noting vocalizations were 16 on 4 Feb *Polk* (RLC), 11 on 18 Feb at Owego Wetlands Complex *Woodbury* (POR), and 20 on 20 Feb *Fremont* (POR).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** None with details.

**Rusty Blackbird:** There were a total of 13 reports of 66 individuals from ten counties. High counts: 17 on 20 Feb at Upper Mississippi River NWR, Green Island *Jackson* (BW) and 33 on 23 Feb at Errington Marsh *Polk* (RLC).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** All: 1 on 3 Dec *Floyd* (BVL), 1 on 3 Jan at North Raccoon R *Carroll* (WO), 1 on 23 Jan *Winnebago* (RAS), 3 on 24 Feb at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (POR), and 2 on 28 Feb at Klum L WMA *Louisa* (POR).

**Common Grackle:** Only 7 reports with a high of 2 on 23 Feb at Sioux City *Woodbury* (POR).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** All: 1 female on

21-23 Jan at Livingston Farm *Ringgold* (JRL, POR).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** High count: 245 on 16 Dec *Clinton* (KJM).

**PINE GROSBEAK:** A winter highlight was the 2 female/imm males continuing from November and reported on 3 Dec-13 Feb at East Lawn Cemetery, Sheldon *O'Brien* (JDJ\*, LAS\*, AB\*, POR\*, m.ob.).

**House Finch:** Only 11 reports. High counts were 104 on 21 Dec *Muscatine & Louisa* (GW) and 80 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Purple Finch:** There were a total of 22 reports. High counts were 22 on 11 Dec *Jackson* (KJM) and 99 on 3 Jan *Clayton* (KJM).

**Red Crossbill:** There were a total of 44 reports this winter. The most reliable location was Graceland Park Cemetery *Woodbury* where up to 50 were present 11 Dec-24 Jan (GLV, POR, JDJ).

**White-winged Crossbill:** There were 36 reports with high counts of 15 on 20 Dec at Davenport *Scott* (KJM) and 8 on 3 Jan at Sioux City *Woodbury* (SJD).

**Common Redpoll:** There were 27 re-



*Pine Siskin*, Sheldon, O'Brien, 19 December 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.



*Western Meadowlark*, Union, 30 December 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

ports this season with high counts of 84 on 20 Dec Jester County P *Polk* (WO) and 30 on 2 Jan at Graceland Park Cemetery *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Pine Siskin:** There were 44 reports this season with high counts of 32 on 29 Jan and 35 on 26 Feb East Lawn Cemetery, Sheldon *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**American Goldfinch:** High counts: 130 on 26 Dec at Seed Savers Exchange *Winneshiek* (CJL) and 62 on 20 Dec at Davenport *Scott* (AJF).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Widely reported along the Mississippi R where high counts included 64 on 14 Dec *Johnson* (LGR), 44 on 15 Dec *Scott & Clinton* (RAS), 234 on 21 Dec *Muscatine & Louisa* (GW), 50 on 13 Jan at Fairmount Cemetery *Scott* (LGR), and 55 on 28 Feb *Muscatine* (POR). Other notable reports included 1 on 1 Jan *Cedar* (BT), 1 on 13-15 Feb *Lucas* (DB), and 1-6 on 24 Dec-19 Jan at Gilbertville *Black Hawk* (CL, RH, DE).

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*Lapland Longspur, Boone, 10 January 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*American Tree Sparrow, Woodbury, 24 February 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Red-tailed Hawk*, Washington, 22 January 2016. Photograph by Adam Ciha, Hills, IA.



*American Kestrel*, near Solon, Johnson, 3 December 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.



*Horned Lark*, Boone, 10 January 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*Winter Wren*, Woodbury, 22 December 2015. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



*Eastern Bluebird, Saylorville Res, Polk, 10 January 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Spotted Towhee, Woodbury, 13 February 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Snow Bunting, Boone, 10 January 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Northern Cardinal, Poweshiek, 29 February 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



# Iowa Christmas Bird Count, 2015–2016

*Chris Caster*

Data were submitted for fifty counts this season. The Amana and Carroll County counts submitted reports after being missed last season. Recently held counts either not run or not submitting, included Marshalltown, Dallas County, Buchanan County, and NW and SE Clayton County.

This count period was prefaced with unseasonably warm weather and large amounts of rainfall. The Keokuk count reported 57 degrees on the 14th and Davenport reported a high of 55 on the 20th. Although some counts dipped below freezing, above average temperatures continued until the 31st. Nearly three inches of rain fell statewide from 12-14 December. According to the state climatologist, only three winter months in Iowa have produced more precipitation than this one storm. More rain came on the 23rd. Surprisingly Christmas Eve did bring some snowfall to parts of the state. Humboldt County reported an inch on the ground on the 26th and Westfield reported 4 inches on the 27th. A large winter storm on the 28th made snow a factor on all the January counts.

The species count was 146, which ties the high number set during the 2012-2013 count. The total number of individuals (680,147) was 20% above average. Saylorville recorded an astounding 100 species on the 20th, breaking their own record of 98 set three seasons earlier. Davenport also had a tremendous count on the 20th, with 96 species, their all-time high. Keokuk and Burlington (84), Green Island (81), and Clinton (80) were other high counts. Spirit Lake (61) led the northern counts, Omaha (83) led the Missouri counts, and Shenandoah and Lamoni (74) led the southern counts. The average count this year had 14 field observers, 6 field parties, and 60 species.

## REGULAR SPECIES

Twelve species were found in record numbers this count. Waterfowl numbers were tremendous and this group provided a new count species. Raptors and gulls were well represented. Other groups were in good, but mixed numbers. Predictably many of the “winter birds” were in short supply and “feeder bird” numbers were reduced. Frequently reported species are recorded in Table 2. Species found on three or fewer counts are recorded in Table 3.

Canada Geese (111,136) numbers were down a bit relative to the exceedingly high numbers they’ve exhibited recently. Cackling Geese (1,182) followed suit. Greater White-fronted Geese (631) were found on nineteen counts. Western Mercer County again led the way with 198. Snow Geese (947) were widespread. Ross’s Geese (3) were only on Missouri River counts. Trumpeter Swans (915) bested last year’s record by nearly two hundred. Large numbers were at Clinton, Princeton, and Des Moines. Tundra Swans (1,103) were nearly all at Clinton, but one found its way to Shenandoah and a count week bird was at Mason City. A Mute Swan was at Davenport.

Mallards (78,126) were plentiful while American Black Ducks (46) were scattered

across twelve counts. Wood Ducks (27) had one of their better counts. All the dabblers were in excellent numbers, but divers did even better. Canvasbacks (64,454) bested their previous record by nearly ten thousand and were on sixteen counts. Redheads (3,221) were in record numbers. Greater Scaup (2,036) also set a new record, primarily at Keokuk. Common Goldeneyes (16,964) were in near-record numbers, as were Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck. White-winged Scoters were at Keokuk and Cedar Falls-Waterloo and a Black Scoter was at Muscatine. Long-tailed Ducks (21) were in record numbers with twenty birds at Clinton. A lone bird was at Grinnell. Perhaps surprisingly, Common Mergansers (3,233) were only a third of their average.

Northern Bobwhite (89) and Gray Partridge (104) had their best year in eight. Union Slough NWR had 77 partridge. Ring-necked Pheasants (1,358) had their best year in five. Wild Turkeys (1,925) were found in average numbers and from all but five counts.

Pied-billed Grebes (22) were scattered across eight counts. Double-crested Cormorants (56) were twice the average. American White Pelicans (1,432) were nearly twice the previous high. Great Blue Herons (123) were again somewhat below average. Bald Eagles (2,517) were well below their average, possibly due to the mild weather and abundant open water. Northern Harriers (106) and Cooper's Hawks (102) were in good numbers. Red-shouldered Hawks (21) were in record numbers. They had been found consistently from 9-15 birds for over a decade. This year they were on ten counts with 7 at Cedar Falls-Waterloo. Red-tailed Hawks (1,853) were average, but Rough-legged Hawks (122) were well below theirs. Golden Eagles (4) were scarce for a second straight year.

American Coots (5,431), Sandhill Cranes (74), and Killdeer (34) all had very good counts. Wilson's Snipes (8) were much harder to find. Bonaparte's Gulls (21) were found on four counts with fourteen at Andalusia. Ring-billed Gulls (70,840) were in unprecedented numbers. Herring Gulls (1,798), however, were only found in average numbers. Thayer's Gulls (4) were on three counts and Lesser Black-backed Gulls (2) were at Spirit Lake and Saylorville. A Glaucous Gull was also at Saylorville.

Rock Pigeons (12,787) and Eurasian Collared-Doves (620) were above their averages. On the other hand, Mourning Dove (3,028) counts have declined somewhat the last three years. Eastern Screech-Owls (98) had their worst year in seven. But twelve at Keokuk and eleven at Lost Nation were nice totals. Great Horned Owls (211) and Barred Owls (168) were both down. Long-eared Owls (59) had their best year in ten; an incredible 36 were at Green Island. Short-eared Owls (8) were on five counts and Northern Saw-whet Owls (13) were on seven. Belted Kingfishers (97) were below average.

Red-headed (265), Red-bellied (2,139), Downy (2,512), and Hairy (695) woodpeckers, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (23), and Northern Flickers (550) all fell below their averages. Pileated Woodpeckers (125) dropped from last year's record to more typical numbers; Davenport had thirteen. American Kestrels (545) were easy to find and Merlins (27) were in exceptional numbers. Peregrine Falcons (4) were on four counts.

Northern Shrikes (40) were in below average numbers. They were widely scattered with three birds making it to southern counts. Blue Jays (4,216) were down slightly, while American Crows (58,511) were typically abundant. Horned Larks (3,573) were found in fair numbers.

Black-capped Chickadees (5,738), Tufted Titmice (714) and White-breasted Nut-

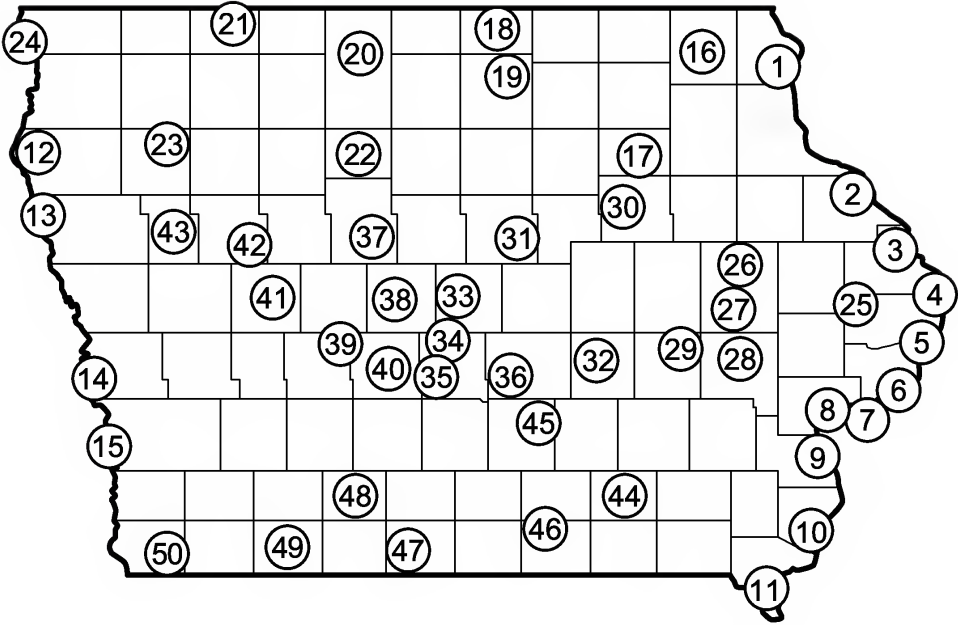


Figure 1. Christmas bird counts in Iowa, 2015–2016 (see Tables 2 and 3).

hatches (2,814) were all down. Red-breasted Nuthatches (33) were approaching their low-water mark. Brown Creepers (284) were counted in fair numbers. Carolina Wrens (121) again remained below-average. It will be interesting to see if they benefit from this mild winter to rebound next season. Winter Wrens (39) were in good numbers. Golden-crowned Kinglets (141) had one of their best years. Ruby-crowned Kinglets (8) were in near-record numbers. Eastern Bluebirds (1,023) were in good numbers. Hermit Thrushes (39) had one of their better counts. American Robins (13,591) had a near-record count. Northern Mockingbirds (8) were on two counts with six at Lamoni. Cedar Waxwings (2,455) and Yellow-rumped Warblers (67) were relatively scarce. Lapland Longspurs (555) were at an eight-year low, while Snow Buntings (1,221) were found in near-average numbers. Last season I mentioned that starlings were somewhat diminished and apparently the birds took it personally. This season European Starlings (74,410) posted their second highest total and Davenport suffered the high count.

Six Spotted Towhees and four Eastern Towhees was spot on average. All Spotted were found on Missouri River counts. Surprisingly three of the Easterns were also on Missouri River counts. A lone Eastern was at Keokuk. American Tree (9,402), Song (524), Swamp (142) and White-throated (463) sparrows numbers were down. Fox (50), Lincoln's (11), Harris's (352) and White-crowned (125) sparrow numbers were up. Two Field Sparrows were at Andalusia. Dark-eyed Juncos (16,015) had their worst count in eleven years. Northern Cardinals (5,466) were found in below average numbers.

Red-winged Blackbirds (22,197) were good numbers. Meadowlarks (928) were reported in record numbers. Four Mississippi River counts reported Eastern Meadowlarks.

Rusty Blackbirds (42) equaled a ten-year low. Brewer's Blackbirds (5) were on three counts. Common Grackles (2,226) and Brown-headed Cowbirds (983) fell slightly below their averages this season.

Purple (382) and House (2,406) finches all fell below their averages. Surprisingly, Common Redpolls (95) were on seven counts with eighty-four at Saylorville. Pine Siskins (184) were down, but Decorah had fifty-seven and Carroll County thirty-four. American Goldfinch (3,831) numbers were at a seventeen-year low. House Sparrows (25,617) numbers were average. Eurasian Tree Sparrows (1,956) were reported in good numbers. They were reported north to Green Island and west to Amana in the middle third and Wapello County in the south.

#### NOTABLE MISSES

In a record setting years you wouldn't think that there would be any, but we had two huge misses this count. Both Loggerhead Shrike and Brown Thrasher were unreported. Neither of these had been missed in more than thirty years. Northern Goshawk was also missed, and had been found in eight of the previous ten counts. This was the fourth straight miss for Ruffed Grouse. Other notable misses were Gray Catbird (7 of last 10), Surf Scoter (6 of last 10), and Townsend's Solitaire (5 of last 10). A staked-out Marsh Wren at Boone County was unfortunately only a count week bird.

#### UNCOMMON SPECIES

Fortunately participants were able to discover some really tremendous birds on several counts. New to the count, this year's best bird had to be the two Harlequin Ducks at Davenport. Not found since 1993-1994, a Summer Tanager was at Des Moines. Not found since 1994-1995, a Say's Phoebe was well documented on the Westfield count. Not found since 1993-1994, an Osprey was reported on the Omaha count and accepted by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. Omaha also had a Great Black-backed Gull on the Iowa side. A Black-legged Kittiwake was on the Des Moines count. Saylorville found an Iceland Gull and the counts only Snowy Owl. Blue-winged Teal were at Green Island, Western Mercer County and Cedar Rapids. A Common Loon was at Red Rock. Horned Grebes were at Spirit Lake and Wapello County, and an Eared Grebe was at Union County. There have been recent years when the Turkey Vulture and two American Pipits found at Keokuk might be heading the uncommon species list. A record four Prairie Falcons were reported, two each from DeSoto NWR and Shenandoah. Le Conte's Sparrows have been found at Lamoni on three of the last five counts. A Yellow-headed Blackbird was at Sioux City. Red Crossbills were at Sioux City and Carroll County. White-winged Crossbills were at Sioux City and Davenport. Lastly, Westfield got two Black-billed Magpies.

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**Table 1. Site Data for 2015–2016 Christmas Bird Counts**

Location	Date	Total		Field		Miles		Owling		Feeder		Temp		Snow		Wind
		Species	Birds	Obs	Pts	Hr	Car	Ft	Hr	Mi	Pt	Hr	L	H	Depth	
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>																
1. Yellow River Forest	21-Dec	54	4,356	7	4	28	247	15	2	20	0	0	36	41	0	NW 0-10
2. Dubuque	2-Jan	54	5,872	14	6	48	241	12	0	0	2	2	17	29	4	W 5-10
3. Green Island	18-Dec	81	8,578	19	5	38.95	307.2	4.25	3	17	2	0.5	21	35	0	W 9-27
4. Clinton	17-Dec	80	67,955	10	5	38.75	305	2	3.25	34	0	0	30	35	0	W 20-30
5. Princeton	15-Dec	77	7,283	9	5	45.25	376*	7	3.75	34	0	0	37	40	0	NE 0-10
6. Davenport	20-Dec	96	48,235	26	8	69.5	495	10.25	9.5	98	8	12.75	34	55	0	S 15-25
7. Andalusia	2-Jan	73	6,295	9	4	36.25	310	4.5	4.75	48	0	0	15	31	2	W 0-10
8. Muscatine	21-Dec	72	10,226	12	5	38.5	318	9	4.75	36	8	8	37	52	0	S 5-15
9. West Mercer County	26-Dec	76	9,165	15	6	43.25	294**	3.5	9	74	0	0	40	56	0	SW 5-20
10. Burlington	19-Dec	84	7,073	17	7	56	282	44	4	18	2	16	18	36	0	S 0-5
11. Keokuk	14-Dec	84	91,195	7	3	27	225	7.25	1.5	18	0	0	41	57	0	WSW 15-24
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>																
12. Westfield	27-Dec	51	5,209	11	5	33	311	12.125	2	15	0	0	1	14	4	NW 4-14
13. Sioux City	17-Dec	70	16,683	23	13	64.55	546.5	26.95	2.75	0.75	2	2.5	28	32	0	SE 10-29
14. De Soto NWR	2-Jan	69	12,161	17	8	50.5	358	10	1	11.5	0	0	16	33	6	S 1-6
15. Omaha	19-Dec	83	16,352	42	13	68.75	340	27.55	2.75	23	7	13	16	42	0	SE 0-14
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>																
16. Decorah	26-Dec	50	4,669	16	6	36	262	14.25	0	0	5	7	27	30	0	NE 5-10
17. Bremer County	20-Dec	42	3,730	8	6	39	377	12	0	0	0	0	29	42	0	S 10-25
18. Worth County	1-Jan	34	2,032	6	3	23	269	6	0.5	10	0	0	18	30	6	W 0-17
19. Mason City	19-Dec	57	14,663	15	8	60.5	522.5	16	0	0	3	3	9	30	0	SW 5-8
20. Union Slough NWR	4-Jan	37	3,262	16	8	44.5	605	10.65	0.5	2	0	0	18	21	5	W 7-15
21. Spirit Lake	20-Dec	61	14,407	8	3	20	218	4	0.15	0.1	2	8	34	42	0	SE 5-15
22. Humboldt County	26-Dec	33	2,080	4	3	22.75	244	6.5	2.5	27	0	0	28	33	1	N 7-17
23. Cherokee	23-Dec	30	2,099	5	2	12	158	0	0	0	0	0	30	35	0	NNW 5-16
24. Canton	2-Jan	46	2,999	12	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	8	na

Location	Date	Total Species		Total Birds		Field		Miles			Owling		Feeder		Temp		Snow		Wind
						Obs	Pts	Hr	Car	Ft	Hr	Mi	Pt	Hr	L	H	Depth		
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>																			
25. Lost Nation	16-Dec	64	7,022	14	5	35.75	378	10.75	2.25	12	0	0	40	48	0	SE	10-20		
26. North Linn	30-Dec	43	3,262	5	3	23	256	0.5	3	20	0	0	22	26	4	unk.	0-10		
27. Cedar Rapids	19-Dec	69	10,266	15	7	59.5	322	4.75	2	20	3	7.5	11	30	0	unk.	0-10		
28. Iowa City	20-Dec	70	9,409	33	11	53	361	17.65	2.5	21.5	5	11.5	37	51	0	S	8-16		
29. Amara	26-Dec	38	1,647	10	3	21	45	12	5	15	2	6	30	38	0	E	15-20		
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	19-Dec	63	20,935	11	7	50	402	24	2	1	0	0	12	32	0	S	5-15		
31. Eldora-Union	19-Dec	35	1,932	7	3	19.3	180.6	4	0.5	6	1	8	11	30	0	S	5-15		
32. Grinnell	19-Dec	29	2,467	4	4	12	85	6	2	6	2	6	18	34	0	SW	0-10		
33. Ames	19-Dec	78	27,443	41	18	111	393.75	45	4.5	22	7	17	13	36	0	SE	1-14		
34. Saylorville Reservoir	20-Dec	100	59,308	21	11	79	615	27	7.25	52	1	35	54	0	SW	11-21			
35. Des Moines	26-Dec	69	18,045	13	7	24	235	14	0	0	5	12	28	36	0	E	5-10		
36. Neal Smith NWR	2-Jan	50	6,183	24	6	26.95	192.2	5.75	2.75	27	2	6	10	30	6	W	0-12		
37. SE Webster County	2-Jan	48	5,741	14	5	30	985	1	1	15	4	25	15	27	7	NNW	0-10		
38. Boone County	2-Jan	62	7,512	40	16	91.75	499.5	36.5	6.25	37	13	45.5	8	33	6	SW	0-12		
39. Jamaica	17-Dec	59	5,156	10	4	24.5	181	9	3	20	3	1	30	35	0	NW	0-11		
40. Dallas County	19-Dec	49	3,740	25	7	31.5	246	12.5	0	0	1	3	16	36	0	S	0-10		
41. Carroll County	3-Jan	55	2,908	4	3	24	109	7	1	8	3	11	11	22	8	N	0-10		
42. Sac County	2-Jan	27	1,325	5	3	15	16	55	0	0	1	1	11	27	6	W	10-20		
43. Ida County	20-Dec	45	4,840	12	7	43	239	14	1	4.5	0	0	24	40	0	WNW	5-10		
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>																			
44. Wapello County	30-Dec	47	3,034	3	1	7	78	0.5	1	0.75	3	6.75	28	33	1.5	calm			
45. Red Rock Reservoir	19-Dec	70	28,414	16	6	46.6	444.9	15.05	4.58	32.7	0	0	14	37	0	SSE	6-12		
46. Rathbun Reservoir	14-Dec	65	6,625	9	4	35	440	3.25	3.25	48	4	4.5	39	45	0	var.	10-25		
47. Lamoni	20-Dec	74	6,570	9	4	20	203	23	1	13	0	0	38	50	0	SSW	20-30		
48. Union County	30-Dec	69	25,265	1	1	9.75	112	2	0.5	3	0	0	17	31	7	W	0-7		
49. Taylor County	26-Dec	43	2,585	5	2	17	168	2	0	0	0	0	32	41	0	NE	3-23		
50. Shenandoah	19-Dec	74	41,934	9	4	31.5	322	5.5	1.5	12	1	1	18	35	0	calm			
<b>TOTALS</b>		146	680,147																

\*\*Includes 14 miles by boat. \*\*\*Includes 2 miles by kayak.

**Table 2a. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2015–2016**

Location	Gr W-f Go	Sn Go	Cack Go	Ca Go	Tr Sw	Tu Sw	Wo Du	Ga	Am Wi	Am Bl Du	Ma
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>											
1. Yellow River Forest				41		25	1	79	1		328
2. Dubuque			6	807				48		3	722
3. Green Island			1	941	25		1	23	22	10	1949
4. Clinton			6	794	308	1075		29	85	9	4994
5. Princeton	10	60		469				2	19		825
6. Davenport	127	22	15	2189	2		14	5	12	5	1134
7. Andalusia			2	474	1		1				65
8. Muscatine			5	482			2				86
9. West Mercer County	198	5	6	977				20	1	1	2489
10. Burlington	7	1	10	1119	24			20			165
11. Keokuk	14		6	1857			1	9	5		1099
Subtotals	356	88	57	10150	360	1100	20	235	145	28	13856
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>											
12. Westfield		533	20	2506				1			64
13. Sioux City	1	7	17	8551				1	2	1	4002
14. De Soto NWR	1		36	6063				1			557
15. Omaha	3	43	58	6731	1			5			465
Subtotals	5	583	131	23851	1	0	0	8	2	1	5088
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>											
16. Decorah				950							5
17. Bremer County				736			1				130
18. Worth County				5							2
19. Mason City	1		286	5772	116	cw		cw			811
20. Union Slough NWR							3				11
21. Spirit Lake	4		37	9605	7						225
22. Humboldt County				658							127
23. Cherokee				4							
24. Canton				2							
Subtotals	5	0	323	17732	123	0	4	0	0	0	1311
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>											
25. Lost Nation				459	91	2		2		4	527
26. North Linn				184							
27. Cedar Rapids	3		1	2108	19					4	545
28. Iowa City	2		12	2274	8			57		1	842
29. Amana				150	20						300
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo			16	6627	91		1	7	1	3	831
31. Eldora-Union				810							cw
32. Grinnell				884							1128
33. Ames	3	3	29	4600	13		1	8	cw	2	1931
34. Saylorville Reservoir	12	4	209	7748	47		1	20	1	3	6388
35. Des Moines	2	6	186	5028	12			11			408
36. Neal Smith NWR				228							50
37. SE Webster County			15	1550	70						25
38. Boone County				56	1						30
39. Jamaica	1	1	6	2272				12	3		799
40. Dallas County			28	484	3						3
41. Carroll County				331	cw				1		10
42. Sac County				750							
43. Ida County		2	1	1670	12				1		285
Subtotals	23	16	503	38213	387	2	3	117	7	17	14102
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>											
44. Wapello County		1		1201	cw			12			96
45. Red Rock Reservoir	95		17	2113				14			1193
46. Rathbun Reservoir		51		427	4			10			8
47. Lamoni		187	22	778	15			4			429
48. Union County	63	1	104	14410				28	1		4684
49. Taylor County			10	764							42
50. Shenandoah	84	20	15	1497	25	1		4	11		37317
Subtotals	242	260	168	21190	44	1	0	72	12	0	43769
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>1182</b>	<b>111136</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>1103</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>78126</b>



No Sh	No Pi	Gr Wi Te	Ca	Re	Ri Ne Du	Gr Sc	Le Sc	Bu	Co Go	Ho Me	Co Me	Re Br Me	Ru Du
			266	2	27		412	452	127	15	9	3	
1	1		4		8		1	1	35	1	57	3	1
343	9	150	35777	60	459	2	1274	606	15348	103	154	1	2
							28	1	5	3			
	1	1	5	1	12		323	19	222		5		3
2			8		9		11	2		7	24		2
	2			1			9	6	12	1	4		
	1		25	4	15		107	92	14	1	1		72
346	13	331	64325	3109	3181	2015	5552	78	1	6	1	1	4322
	2	4	1		1		2		2	1	19		
							1		41	1	32		
		26	7	1			19	4	105	10	11		
2	4	26	8	1	1	0	22	5	189	12	131	0	3
													3
							1						1
	1			1	1		1			1	1		2
21	1	1	32	32	103	2	44	2	188	27	176	2	25
21	2	1	32	33	104	2	46	2	188	27	176	2	28
	4	1			1		11						
4		1	45	40	42		76		52		2	1	
									5		59		
		2	3	4	5		4	2	14	1	10		8
2	3	2		1	2		3	1	5	1	3		
41	77	41		2	53	6	101	1	305	23	1297	12	3
1				20	3		3		186	12	151	1	2
							4		20		40		
			9		6		11			22	5		1
							1		2				
4	1	2											
52	85	49	57	66	113	6	214	3	589	58	1568	14	14
			3		1					1			2
	1		14	1	2		4	1	147	10	1000	2	4
					1			24		35	6		
2								2	3	1			
10	1	8	15	11	40	11	82	5	74	30	32		11
							1						16
2							4		2	2			1
14	317	27			111	11	91	32	226	79	1038	2	34
435	423	442	64454	3221	4086	2036	8150	1317	16964	313	3233	22	4983

**Table 2b. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2015–2016**

Location	Gr Pa	Ri Ne Ph	Wi Tu	No Bo	Pi Bi Gr	Am Wh Pe	D-c Co	Gr Bl He	Ba Ea	No Ha	Sh Ha
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>											
1. Yellow River Forest			132						83		
2. Dubuque			172					1	49		2
3. Green Island			9					3	131	14	
4. Clinton			5		1	2		12	200	4	2
5. Princeton		4	75	16		17	1	10	100		2
6. Davenport		2	16		2	63	7	12	125	3	1
7. Andalusia		8	64				1	1	91	2	
8. Muscatine		30	11			3		7	34	1	2
9. West Mercer County			11					6	40	2	2
10. Burlington		5			5	60	2	24	114	2	9
11. Keokuk			57			1	1	6	191	5	
Subtotals	0	49	552	16	8	146	12	82	1158	33	20
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>											
12. Westfield		18	44	19					16		1
13. Sioux City		2	143				1		13	2	2
14. De Soto NWR		20	170					3	32	3	3
15. Omaha			73	12				3	40	4	5
Subtotals	0	40	430	31	0	0	1	6	101	9	11
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>											
16. Decorah		6	109						55	4	cw
17. Bremer County		1	6						53	8	
18. Worth County	4	38	41						7		1
19. Mason City	7	14	133						43	1	
20. Union Slough NWR	77	366							18		
21. Spirit Lake		18	12						10		
22. Humboldt County		29	31						12		1
23. Cherokee		16	18						26		
24. Canton		80	21						39		1
Subtotals	88	568	371	0	0	0	0	0	263	13	3
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>											
25. Lost Nation		7	12					1	116	8	1
26. North Linn		40	70						41	2	1
27. Cedar Rapids		4	45		1	1		1	47		1
28. Iowa City		2	36						74	1	1
29. Amana			8			8		1	14		
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo		11	29						55		1
31. Eldora-Union			1						27		
32. Grinnell		10	13						7		2
33. Ames	3	103	15					2	33	cw	cw
34. Saylorville Reservoir		9	22		1	4	8	1	66	6	2
35. Des Moines			27			161	5	1	36		3
36. Neal Smith NWR		23	24						10	3	
37. SE Webster County	5	157	8			2		1	17	1	
38. Boone County		192	60	3					53	2	1
39. Jamaica		7	14					2	10	1	3
40. Dallas County		13							21	1	1
41. Carroll County	8	35	2						8		4
42. Sac County	cw	21							17		
43. Ida County		7	3						2		
Subtotals	16	641	389	3	2	176	13	10	654	25	20
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>											
44. Wapello County		12	6					7	32	1	
45. Red Rock Reservoir		20	28			1014		1	141	1	
46. Rathbun Reservoir			25	12	4	96	24	10	64	5	
47. Lamoni			108	14			1	2	60	15	
48. Union County		19	11		1				3	1	
49. Taylor County		2						1	12	1	
50. Shenandoah		7	5	13	7		5	4	29	2	1
Subtotals	0	60	183	39	12	1110	30	25	341	26	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1432</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>2517</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>55</b>

Co Ha	ac sp	Re Sh Ha	Re Ta Ha	Ro Le Ha	bu sp	Go Fa	Am Co	Sa Cr	Ki	Wi Sn	Bo Gu	Ri Bi Gu	He Gu
2			21	1			139					224	1
5			60	1			1					123	
2	5	1	61				1	2	15			281	5
1			39	3			703	66				598	630
1			42			1	5		1			383	2
9		3	78	6			27	3	5			3868	332
2		3	43	5							14	314	4
3			48	2								21	8
1			25	1			48					22	2
3			34	1			8			1		128	1
1		2	26	1			1778		1			1627	2
30	5	9	477	21	0	1	2710	71	22	1	14	7589	987
1			19	9									
3			85	4			2						
2			70	2			6						
4	2		123	2			2		5			1591	
10	2	0	297	17	0	0	10	0	5	0	0	1591	0
3			20	2									
2		1	25	2									
			16	2		1							
2			34	1			50					1	
3			7										
1	1		20				2102				1	94	34
1			5										
			19	3									
			32	3									
12	1	1	178	13	0	1	2152	0	0	0	1	95	34
2			28	2									
2			16	2									
1		1	37	17					1			529	7
3	2		46	3	1		3					1187	1
	1		12	3								175	
2		7	35	1			1						
			30	1									
			27							1			
16			82	2			13		1	1		5	
2			67	4			12	3		3	2	35321	530
1			24	2			4					5523	40
1			41	1	1							1600	80
1			18	3		1							
7	2	1	76	9	1	1				1			
			29	1			83						
			47	1									
			15	1									
1			17										
cw			27										
2													
41	5	9	674	53	3	2	116	3	2	6	2	44340	658
cw			9									119	15
2	1	1	68	3								15690	98
3			23	3							4	1415	6
		1	43	9			47						
			19				259						
2			30	2	5								
2			35	1			137		5	1			
9	1	2	227	18	5	0	443	0	5	1	4	17225	119
102	14	21	1853	122	8	4	5431	74	34	8	21	70840	1798

**Table 2c. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2015–2016**

Location	Ro Pi	Eu Co Do	Mo Do	Ea Sc Ow	Gr Ho Ow	Ba Ow	Lo Ea Ow	Sh Ea Ow	No S-w Ow	Be Ki	Re He Wo
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>											
1. Yellow River Forest	113	22	62		1	1				1	
2. Dubuque	251		48		1	1				5	
3. Green Island	169		38	8	7	7	36	2		2	6
4. Clinton	49	1	49	5	11	1				3	13
5. Princeton	498		107	3	6	4	1	1		5	43
6. Davenport	1166		260	4	8	14				9	11
7. Andalusia	155	6	462	2	9	14	1			2	2
8. Muscatine	297	1	201	2	5	1				4	1
9. West Mercer County	159	2	132	7	9	22	1		3	2	21
10. Burlington	234	23	244	1	2	2		1		4	34
11. Keokuk	96	6	53	12	2	2			1	3	2
Subtotals	3187	61	1656	44	61	69	39	4	4	40	133
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>											
12. Westfield	78	8	13		5	2				1	
13. Sioux City	543	29	4	3	3					1	
14. De Soto NWR	95	5	24	2	4	3				2	2
15. Omaha	255	31	36		6	5				5	2
Subtotals	971	73	77	5	18	10	0	0	0	9	4
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>											
16. Decorah	401		24	cw	1	1				4	
17. Bremer County	211	6	16		1	5				1	2
18. Worth County	317				1						
19. Mason City	374		43	1	1	1	1		1	4	
20. Union Slough NWR	83	4	10		2						
21. Spirit Lake	111	4		2						1	
22. Humboldt County	125	2	3							1	
23. Cherokee	290	3	3								
24. Canton	399	89	16	8	14		1		5		
Subtotals	2311	108	115	11	20	7	2	0	6	11	2
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>											
25. Lost Nation	105		48	11	3	2				2	44
26. North Linn	9	18	129	1	2	4				2	1
27. Cedar Rapids	795		94	3	6	3	1			5	1
28. Iowa City	320	7	52	1	3	2				1	
29. Amana	20	2	1	1		2					
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	864	2	128		2	2	1			1	
31. Eldora-Union	68	25			3				1		2
32. Grinnell	13		3		1						1
33. Ames	1372	23	109	1	9	8	1			6	
34. Saylorville Reservoir	292	10	96	5	12	9	1		1	2	
35. Des Moines	409	3	142		2	3				5	
36. Neal Smith NWR	117	21	87		7	1	2	cw			
37. SE Webster County	149	52	1		2					1	1
38. Boone County	228	26	62	6	29	19				2	10
39. Jamaica	7	22	1	1	2	4	2			1	14
40. Dallas County	129		6		1	2				1	
41. Carroll County	91	31	54	1	2	2	1			cw	
42. Sac County	9		cw		cw						
43. Ida County	192	51	14		2		2		cw		1
Subtotals	5189	293	1027	31	88	63	11	0	2	29	75
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>											
44. Wapello County	803	8	75			2					5
45. Red Rock Reservoir	23	20	37	3	9	8				2	
46. Rathbun Reservoir	96	5	15	1	5	2				3	17
47. Lamoni	99	18	7	2	6	3	1	1		3	12
48. Union County	7	3	15	1	2	2	6	3	1		5
49. Taylor County	45	2	2								10
50. Shenandoah	56	29	2		2	2					2
Subtotals	1129	85	153	7	24	19	7	4	1	8	51
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>12787</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>3028</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>265</b>

Re Be Wo	Ye Be Sa	Do Wo	Ha Wo	No Fl	Pi Wo	Am Ke	Me	Pe Fa	No Sh	Bl Ja	Am Cr	Ho La	Bl Ca Ch
45		37	13	2	11	9	1			67	226		122
55	1	30	7	2	8	10			cw	91	319	33	150
55	3	42	17	27	5	30	1		3	119	409	5	164
43	2	46	16	11	3	11				50	430	11	102
76	1	90	16	14	5	16	1			210	101	24	208
104	1	145	38	8	13	26		1	1	141	179	11	314
37		49	15	11	9	26				87	54	173	104
54	2	56	25	10	6	31				126	69	3	130
82	1	49	27	15	11	20			1	136	113	24	105
68	2	67	13	20	4	19	1	1		152	174	11	130
74		46	15	29	6	12				325	25623	116	192
693	13	657	202	149	81	210	4	2	5	1504	27697	411	1721
24	1	33	7	27		1	1		2	46	66	111	63
48		57	11	15		8	1		2	52	162	2	204
36		57	5	7	1	21	3		1	68	63	33	87
126		116	35	58	3	26	3		1	42	66	27	217
234	1	263	58	107	4	56	8	0	6	208	357	173	571
50		53	19	1	6	4			1	96	286		144
19		26	9			15	1		2	38	526		62
5		8	2		1	2		1		48	142	57	18
32		82	18	3	3	1			1	137	4468		168
3		10	8			1	1		1	28	271	713	13
19		32	8	3					2	31	43		63
10		20	2	1		2			2	5	28	90	67
11		6	4	1		2				18	214		20
24		24	9	13	2	2	3		3	46	137	192	55
173	0	261	79	22	10	29	5	1	12	447	6115	1052	610
40	3	25	14	23	7	33		1		75	349	15	39
13		20	1	3					1	61	66	170	74
64	1	134	29	8	4	18				94	362	5	319
57		74	13	9	2	22			1	69	731		148
10		12	1	1	1	8				20	15	1	30
27		59	11	1	1	9			2	88	8914		198
22		21	2		2	1	1			40	163		23
3		7	3	1		3				14	110		6
155		236	57	7		8	1		1	176	10600	29	509
87		105	27	22	1	10	2		2	125	209	2	297
45		88	23	13	4	4	1		1	63	910		120
33		45	5	10		5				69	45	214	42
29	1	16	7	3						41	129	64	39
161		175	73	14	7	15			1	189	386	228	353
26		22	8	5		10	1		3	94	45		40
46	2	53	15	10		6	1		1	70	179	30	179
8		12	10	cw		6	1		1	33	26	703	14
19		15	4	1		1				40	45	3	46
21		21	6	24		2	1			125	105		29
866	7	1140	309	155	29	161	8	1	14	1486	23389	1464	2505
11		7	5		2	5				65	36	44	16
66	2	95	18	30	2	11				141	249	2	206
24		18	4	16	2	25				80	129	7	27
38		23	11	37	5	31			1	119	306	21	41
8		13	3	14		8	2		1	39	62	363	9
6		13	3	14		3			1	72	109		13
20		22	3	6		6				55	62	36	19
173	2	191	47	117	11	89	2	0	3	571	953	473	331
2139	23	2512	695	550	135	545	27	4	40	4216	58511	3573	5738

**Table 2d. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2015–2016**

Location	Tu Ti	Re Br Nu	Wh Br Nu	Br Cr	Ca Wr	Wi Wr	Go Cr Ki	Ru Cr Ki	Ea Bl	He Th	Am Ro
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>											
1. Yellow River Forest	24		45	2			4		9		3
2. Dubuque	36		49	4	1	1			14		24
3. Green Island	29	1	102	18	2	7	28	1	92		137
4. Clinton	30		79	12		1	1		15		66
5. Princeton	27		106	16	4	2	3	1	15	7	30
6. Davenport	67		171	26	21	3	4		37	3	242
7. Andalusia	16		54	17	3	3	9	1	22	3	34
8. Muscatine	46		64	10	3	1	2		22		159
9. West Mercer County	52		61	5	7	3	4		29	9	984
10. Burlington	22	2	75	4	17	3	1		78	1	218
11. Keokuk	68	1	52	13	18		4		70	2	302
Subtotals	417	4	858	127	76	24	60	3	403	25	2199
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>											
12. Westfield			20	3			3		58		15
13. Sioux City		1	90	3	1	3	1		18	1	48
14. De Soto NWR			51	4	6	1			56		323
15. Omaha	29	1	182	10	20	4	12	1	91	2	454
Subtotals	30	2	343	20	27	8	16	1	223	3	840
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>											
16. Decorah	6	4	42	1		1			1	1	10
17. Bremer County			20								
18. Worth County			9								5
19. Mason City		1	67	4							1
20. Union Slough NWR			6								1
21. Spirit Lake			37				8			1	6
22. Humboldt County	36										12
23. Cherokee			9	1							73
24. Canton			21	3			7				30
Subtotals	42	5	211	9	0	1	15	0	1	2	138
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>											
25. Lost Nation	9	1	12	9			1				149
26. North Linn	1		54	3							15
27. Cedar Rapids	47	1	128	18	2			2	18	3	4
28. Iowa City	27		73	4	2			1	46		25
29. Amana			9								21
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	1	9	40	1							4
31. Eldora-Union			27								3
32. Grinnell			6								
33. Ames		1	248	36	5	1	2		27	1	102
34. Saylorville Reservoir	7	1	110	13	1	1	3		75	1	290
35. Des Moines	8		77	6	3				6		329
36. Neal Smith NWR			23	2					7		17
37. SE Webster County	2		29			1			1		1
38. Boone County	61	7	207	4		1	5		21	1	115
39. Jamaica	3		33	2					7		682
40. Dallas County	5		51	5	1		1		50		879
41. Carroll County		2	10				1				124
42. Sac County			31								7
43. Ida County			30	6			1				397
Subtotals	171	22	1198	109	14	4	14	3	258	6	3164
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>											
44. Wapello County	1		5								1
45. Red Rock Reservoir	29		98	4			10		34	2	44
46. Rathbun Reservoir	7		26				2		32	1	2256
47. Lamoni	11		38	6	2	2	12		40		1962
48. Union County			4				3		5		2156
49. Taylor County	1		11	1	1		2		27		513
50. Shenandoah	5		22	8	1		7	1			318
Subtotals	54	0	204	19	4	2	36	1	138	3	7250
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2814</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>13591</b>

	Eu St	Ce Wa	La Lo	Sn Bu	Ye Ru Wa	Am Tr Sp	Sa Sp	Fo Sp	So Sp	Li Sp	Sw Sp	Wh Th Sp	Ha Sp	Wh Cr Sp
277						173			4					1
335	7			cw		439			8					
1466	88	20			12	232			6		3	14		4
1128		1	3		5	171			10		12	3		
1633	2	93	1		4	303	1		16		4	10		
9492	31	40			4	281	1	2	75	2	50	34		12
958	3	16			2	213			18		2	18		4
6310	11				2	66			7		1	19		1
856	47	68	2		9	293		2	31		6	19		8
1098	67	2				290	1	1	16		7	27		7
9391	120	31		1		190		3	26	1	8	91		
32944	376	271	6	39	2651		3	8	217	3	93	235	0	37
93	50	10	302			358			1					
945	61					305			1	1			1	2
1898	40		2			266	1		29	4		15	70	30
2013	62			5		413		4	54	3	5	74	84	10
4949	213	10	304	5	1342		1	4	85	8	5	89	155	42
930	261					113			3			1		1
569		14				194			1		3	3		
173		10	296			241								
521	50	70	21			163			1			3		
522		63	323			26		1					2	
468	87		3			110		1	2				7	
402						29							3	
1025	81	10	5			23								
374	194	1	35	1		70							1	
4984	673	168	683	1	969		0	2	7	0	3	7	13	1
1577	14	63	20			105		20	1		1	2		
446	12		10			48								
2380	86	5				181			17			4	5	2
1157	199			1		109		1	12			19	2	16
500	1					47			4					
1144	98					112		1	4			3		
335	1					73			1				2	
105						19								
3785	46			1		476		2	18		1	15	2	1
2384	70	10		2		484		1	40		28	32	10	5
2685						209			8			7	10	2
1082			1			518			13			9	11	1
2567			25			42		2				1	1	
1461		11	11			389	1	1	18		1	2	37	
286	21					122			23				2	
608	26			1		69		1	1				4	
234	3	9	83	1		62			1			1	13	2
20						10							2	
1096	36					138							3	
23852	613	98	150	6	3213		1	29	161	0	31	95	104	29
89						32			20					
3924	36					234			8			12	3	
240	451			7		106		5	1			12	7	3
956	39			3		100	1	1	11		1	8	20	9
1877	1	8	78	6		236			3		3	1		
100	41					367			2				23	4
495	12					152		1	9		6	4	27	
7681	580	8	78	16	1227		1	7	54	0	10	37	80	16
74410	2455	555	1221	67	9402		6	50	524	11	142	463	352	125



**Table 2e. Christmas Bird Count Data, 2015–2016**

Location	Da Ey Ju	No Ca	Re Wi Bl	Ea Me	We Me	me sp	Ru Bl	Co Gr	Br He Co	Pu Fi	Ho Fi
<b>MISSISSIPPI RIVER</b>											
1. Yellow River Forest	234	33								1	25
2. Dubuque	973	150									98
3. Green Island	324	112	688						11	34	28
4. Clinton	232	77	7				1	1	1	9	41
5. Princeton	314	245	12	1				2	270	11	112
6. Davenport	775	319	18342	3			10	2041	67	53	176
7. Andalusia	411	183	253	1				1	26	3	54
8. Muscatine	326	220	6	1					5	3	106
9. West Mercer County	355	277	14					1	1	17	10
10. Burlington	497	185	11					54		42	80
11. Keokuk	241	224	337				1	2		12	5
Subtotals	4682	2025	19670	6	0	0	12	2102	381	185	735
<b>MISSOURI RIVER</b>											
12. Westfield	229	17									1
13. Sioux City	469	50	42								111
14. De Soto NWR	724	142	9		1	439				1	13
15. Omaha	658	188	277			201				25	59
Subtotals	2080	397	328	0	1	640	0	0	0	26	184
<b>NORTHERN THIRD</b>											
16. Decorah	330	57	1					1		12	51
17. Bremer County	79	44						2			41
18. Worth County	44	6						1			33
19. Mason City	302	73								1	98
20. Union Slough NWR	59	15	32					1		7	37
21. Spirit Lake	42	3	2						2	5	26
22. Humboldt County	23	51							1		1
23. Cherokee	88	4									2
24. Canton	257	41			53		1			2	18
Subtotals	1224	294	35	0	53	0	1	5	3	27	307
<b>MIDDLE THIRD</b>											
25. Lost Nation	262	96	985				24	4	245		2
26. North Linn	533	153				1					37
27. Cedar Rapids	494	332	1							1	142
28. Iowa City	228	156	2					17	1	9	179
29. Amana	40	30									2
30. Cedar Falls-Waterloo	369	152								1	48
31. Eldora-Union	52	22	10					3		1	7
32. Grinnell	19	9									9
33. Ames	659	261	3			2	3	3	58	3	254
34. Saylorville Reservoir	693	282	122			3		1	34	24	42
35. Des Moines	289	221	22					13	9	4	84
36. Neal Smith NWR	657	165	120		11	9		1		3	70
37. SE Webster County	189	28	50			1					1
38. Boone County	904	209	410			24				8	88
39. Jamaica	134	32				8		20		20	6
40. Dallas County	198	70	1							12	48
41. Carroll County	305	45	50			27			1	cw	52
42. Sac County	166	22				cw		21	1	2	15
43. Ida County	133	21	1					2		3	1
Subtotals	6324	2306	1777	0	11	75	27	85	349	91	1087
<b>SOUTHERN THIRD</b>											
44. Wapello County	106	44						3		5	3
45. Red Rock Reservoir	534	187	2		1				150	3	40
46. Rathbun Reservoir	104	57	126			1			25	10	4
47. Lamoni	289	52	59			2	2	26	75	15	19
48. Union County	256	9				26				20	8
49. Taylor County	209	33				1					
50. Shenandoah	207	62	200			111		5			19
Subtotals	1705	444	387	0	1	141	2	34	250	53	93
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16015</b>	<b>5466</b>	<b>22197</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2226</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>2406</b>

Co Re	Pi Si	Am Go	Ho Sp	Eu Tr Sp			
4	11	30	367				
		66	544				
		20	176	1			
		24	752	21			
	28	1	68	353	105		
			161	4270	240		
		41	1464	102			
		6	72	612	322		
		1	24	41	455	692	
				84	591	286	
		78	72	83			
5	70	685	9656	1852			
2		65	218				
		97	258				
		177	308				
		475	339				
2	3	814	1123	0			
1	57	238	301				
		139	714				
		40	455				
		57	610				
	1	2		534			
				430			
				298			
				108			
				100	572		
				607	4022	0	
2	59	607	4022	0			
1	1	193	1106	2			
		2	1014				
		86	907	23			
		87	652	42			
	2	10	150	150	16		
			37	826			
		22	129				
		35	25				
		97	1134				
		84	1	198	475		
3	2	104	249				
		17	615				
		55	336				
		154	878				
2	1	80	69				
		59	317				
		68	362				
		24	16				
2	34	21	336				
		86	51	1349	9596	83	
1	1	31	69	21			
		123	325				
		42	364				
		65	196				
	0	1	14	44			
			65	18			
			36	204			
			376	1220	21		
			95	184	3831	25617	1956

**Table 3. Species reported on three or fewer Christmas Bird Counts, 2015–2016**

Species	Counts
Ross's Goose	Sioux City (1), Omaha (1), Shenandoah (1)
Mute Swan	Davenport (1)
Blue-winged Teal	Green Island (1), W. Mercer County (2), Cedar Rapids (1)
Harlequin Duck	Davenport (2)
White-winged Scoter	Keokuk (1), Cedar Falls-Waterloo (1)
Black Scoter	Muscatine (1)
Long-tailed Duck	Clinton (20), Grinnell (1),
duck sp.	Omaha (50), Taylor County (1)
Common Loon	Red Rock (1)
Horned Grebe	Spirit Lake (1), Wapello County (1)
Eared Grebe	Union County (1)
Turkey Vulture	Keokuk (1)
Osprey	Omaha (1)
raptor sp.	Boone County (1)
Thayer's Gull	Davenport (1), Saylorville (2), Neal Smith NWR (1)
Iceland Gull	Saylorville (1)
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Spirit Lake (1), Saylorville (1)
Glaucous Gull	Saylorville (1)
Great Black-backed Gull	Omaha (1)
Black-legged Kittiwake	Des Moines (1)
Snowy Owl	Saylorville (1)
woodpecker sp.	Neal Smith NWR (1)
Prairie Falcon	DeSoto NWR (2), Shenandoah (2)
Say's Phoebe	Westfield (1)
shrike sp.	Iowa City (1)
Black-billed Magpie	Westfield (2)
Marsh Wren	Boone County (cw)
Northern Mockingbird	W. Mercer County (2), Lamoni (6)
American Pipit	Keokuk (2)
Summer Tanager	Des Moines (1)
Spotted Towhee	Sioux City (2), DeSoto NWR (2), Omaha (2)
Eastern Towhee	Keokuk (1), DeSoto NWR (2), Omaha (1)
Field Sparrow	Andalusia (2)
Le Conte's Sparrow	Lamoni (3)
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Sioux City (1)
Brewer's Blackbird	Sioux City (2), Carroll County (1), Shenandoah (2)
Red Crossbill	Sioux City (100), Carroll County (cw)
White-winged Crossbill	Davenport (15), Sioux City (1)



*Hybrid Canada X Snow Goose, Slater SL, Story, 30 January 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Carolina Wren, Lake Macbride SP, Johnson, 12 December 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Business Meeting

27 August 2016

The I.O.U. fall business meeting was held at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, West Lake Okoboji. President Francis Moore called the meeting to order at 4:01 P.M. In attendance were Dennis Thompson, vice-president; Rex Rundquist, secretary; Mary Beth Hunt, treasurer; directors at large Tyler Harms, and Linda Rudolph, Gerald White, and other members of the organization.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes of the spring 2016 meeting that was held in Ames were accepted as published in *Iowa Bird Life* (Volume 86, No. 1). It was moved to approve the minutes as published, and Paul Skrade seconded. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Beth Hunt remarked that our financial situation is as expected and gave a brief summary of our financial status. Profit/loss and balance sheet comparisons were presented. Once again it was explained that year-to-year comparisons are difficult due to the irregular nature of the timing of renewals, billing, and payments. Budget is "on schedule". Mary Beth asked if there were budget questions but none were heard.

**Membership Coordinator's Report:** Cecille Thompson reported that our current membership total is at 410. There have been 51 new memberships in 2016 (14 new since the spring meeting), but there are 47 non-renewals from last year. Members were informed that website information includes renewal/non-renewal information. It was suggested that members consult the list and invite non-renewing members back to the group.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Publications Committee:** Ann Johnson reported that as of the last issue (July)

the newsletter no longer exists. Most information is now available electronically and getting articles for the newsletter became difficult and time consuming. It had lasted from 1985-2016. A brief history of volunteer editors over the years was reviewed and they were thanked for their efforts. The plans continue for converting *Iowa Bird Life* to a downloadable e-reader format on the I.O.U. website. Cecille Thompson is assisting Ann in this endeavor.

**Records Committee:** Chairman Paul Hertzell reported that, thus far, in 2016 there were 23 reports reviewed (8 reports by Paul Roisen). In the current year so far there were 3 records reviewed in winter, 14 in spring, and 5 this summer. The reviews are published on the I.O.U. website. Recent Iowa reintroductions of Greater Prairie-Chicken continue to raise some questions for the committee. Paul stressed the importance of members continuing to make these reports when record birds are suspected.

**Membership Committee:** Paul Skrade offered a report. Concern remains about members who do not renew. A letter is being sent to these individuals with an enclosed card to send back with their comments. I.O.U. logo apparel will now be purchased through website. Current IOU merchandise needs to be sold. The new dues structure, proposed at the spring meeting

includes a youth/student membership of \$20.00. All other memberships are \$25.00 with access to electronic publications only, or \$35.00 for those wishing to continue to receive the printed publications. The organization is moving toward an electronic-only membership option for all. President Francis Moore indicated that we needed to vote in the new proposed dues structure. Paul Roisen moved that we accept the new membership levels as stated. Doug Harr seconded. Motion carried.

**Projects Committee:** Tyler Harms reported that stickers and placards with the I.O.U. logo are sent to recipients to display on items funded by the organization. Joe Jungers has replaced Candace Havelly who has completed her four-year term on the committee.

**Library/Historical Committee:** Hank Zaletel (no report).

**Events Committee:** Eric Ollie reported that the 18 June trip to Yellow River State Forest was a success. There were 21 attendees. Many Cerulean Warblers were seen, and a full report is on the I.O.U. website. An 8 October 2016 trip to Appanoose County is being planned with Nelson's Sparrow as a key target bird.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

**Communications Committee:** Ann Johnson reports that the communications committee, which will govern the I.O.U.'s presence on the listserv, Twitter, Facebook, and others, continues to evolve. It remains an ad hoc committee that could eventually be integrated into our committee structure. Rick Hollis, Linda Rudolph, Paul Skrade,

and Matt Wetrich have been helping in these efforts. The plan is to have timely communication with the I.O.U. membership via email.

**Meetings:** Vice-president Dennis Thompson delivered a report on the planned spring 2017 meeting at the convention center in Chariton, Iowa, in coordination with Lucas County Birding Festival on 5-7 May 2017. Other sponsors include Iowa Audubon and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The planned speaker is Laura Erickson from Duluth. The fall 2017 meeting is being planned in Dubuque, probably in November. The spring 2016 meeting in Ames had 97 attendees and 190 species were found. There were 11 new attendees at the fall 2016 meeting.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Pelican Festival:** To be held on 11 September 2016 at Coralville. Contact Karen Disbrow for details.

**CyHawk Birding Challenge:** To be held on 18 September 2016. Members were informed that anyone could form a team and register and bird anywhere in Iowa for 24 hours. Interested birders may consult Rick Hollis or Eric Ollie for rules and further details.

**Marshall County Hawk Watch:** This annual watch is in the Iowa River Valley. Contact Mark Proescholdt for details.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 4:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rex W. Rundquist, secretary

# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board of Directors Meeting

27 August 2016

**The I.O.U. fall board meeting** was held at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, West Lake Okoboji. President Francis Moore called the meeting to order at 12:17 P.M. Attending were vice-president Dennis Thompson, secretary Rex Rundquist, treasurer Mary Beth Hunt, and directors at large Gerald White, Linda Rudolph, Candace Havelly, and Tyler Harms. Attending as guests were Doug Harr, Ann Johnson, Eric Ollie, Paul Skrade, and Hank Zaletel.

**Secretary's Report:** The minutes of the Spring 2016 meeting that was held in Ames were accepted as published in *Iowa Bird Life* (Volume 86, No. 1). The published date of the meeting is correct (13 May 2016). With this noted, Candace Havelly moved to approve the minutes as published. Tyler Harms seconded.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Beth Hunt gave the directors a brief summary of our financial status. Profit/loss and balance sheet comparisons were presented. A printed report was not available at meeting time. However, we are reportedly "on budget" as of 31 July 2016. The board accepted the report. The need for a Budget Committee meeting before the end of the year was expressed and a tentative date of 20 November 2016 was set either in Ames or Oskaloosa.

**Membership Coordinator's Report:** Cecille Thompson reported that eleven first-time attendees were present at this fall meeting.

Remaining reports were to be discussed at the Business Meeting.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Membership Committee:** Further discussion revealed that there are 51 new memberships in 2016, but also 49 members who have not renewed. Paul Skrade explained that letters (with a response card included) will be

sent to all not renewing. Ann Johnson pointed out that there is no more IOU newsletter going forward. There are new communication efforts underway (i.e., "Bobolink" email). New merchandising plans will be discussed at the business meeting.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** No report. Work continues.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Meetings:** Vice-president Dennis Thompson reports that the spring 2016 meeting in Ames was a success with a profit of \$23.22. The 2017 spring meeting will be the first weekend in May at the Lucas County Birding Festival at the Lucas County Convention Center in Chariton. Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Audubon, and the I.O.U. are sponsors. The guest speaker will be Laura Erickson of "Laura Erickson's For the Birds" in Duluth. The fall 2017 meeting is being planned for November in Dubuque.

The new dues structure was mentioned briefly and will be discussed in more detail at the business meeting.

The board of directors meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rex W. Rundquist, secretary



# **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

The lead article in the June 1966 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* was the report on the spring meeting held in Iowa City. A total of 117 people registered for the meeting, typical of attendance at that time. Formal talks were given on Saturday morning and afternoon with the featured lecture given by Milton Weller of Iowa State University on the Black-headed Duck of South America. Like the Brown-headed Cowbird, this relative of the Ruddy Duck lays its eggs exclusively in the nests of other ducks, coots, and ibises and depends on those birds to incubate its eggs. Once the young hatch, they are entirely on their own to survive. Another talk by David Trauger, also from Iowa State, discussed the status of Ross's Goose in Iowa. At the time this species was mainly found in western North America and there were only three reports from Iowa. Since then, both its range and population have grown considerably and it is found in Iowa every year. Field trips on Sunday were hampered by heavy rain but still found a total of 117 species.

The spring season for 1966 had few rarities with a Cattle Egret near Jesup probably the best find. The season was described as having a good migration of various species of geese, a generally poor showing by shorebirds, several large waves of warblers in May, and numerous reports of Pine Siskins in May.

Among the books reviewed, perhaps the most interesting was a new field guide by Chandler Robbins, Bertel Bruun, and Herbert Zim that unlike the Peterson field guides, covered both eastern and western North America. This book also featured distribution maps of each species and soon became a favorite of many birders. Another innovation in this book was including a sonogram, a small graphic presentation of the song, for each species. For several decades it ranked up with the Peterson field guides as being the most popular in what then was a relatively limited set of choices. For many years this was the field guide that I recommended to my students, in part because it covered western North America. Co-author Chandler Robbins, who started the federal Breeding Bird Survey and is now 98 years young, is still actively birding and doing some field work.

646 Mallory Hill Drive, The Villages, FL 32162 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)



*Red Crossbill, Sheldon, O'Brien, 4 January 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*House Finch, Woodbury, 24 February 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue (Vol. xx[1])**, **April 1 for spring issue [2]**, **July 1 for summer issue [3]**, **October 1 for fall issue [4]**. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

**IOU News Co-editors:** John and Anna Bissell, 328 SE Cedarwood Drive, Grimes, IA50111-1143 (John.annabissell@gmail.com)

**IOU WEB SITE:** <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

**IOWA RBA:** John Bissell ([john.annabissell@gmail.com](mailto:john.annabissell@gmail.com))

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 1813 Liberty Lane, Coralville, IA 52241 ([cjcaster@q.com](mailto:cjcaster@q.com)).

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Subscribe at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Update your on-line profile at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)> or send address and e-mail changes to Membership Coordinator Cecille Thompson, 7503 Wildflower Ct., Johnston, IA 50131 ([cnthomps@acm.org](mailto:cnthomps@acm.org)).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Spring: 5–7 May 2017, Chariton.**

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Red-bellied Woodpecker, Kent P. Johnson, 1 January 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Short-eared Owl, Woodbury, 27 January 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.

DESIGN: Marshall Desktop Publishing Inc., Evergreen, CO

GRAPHICS: Richard Beachler, Boone, IA

PRINTER: Centennial Printing, Louisville, CO



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**IOWA BIRD LIFE**  
**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



Summer 2016 . Volume 86 . Number 3



## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Food habits of three owl species in Iowa

Marit A. Bakken and Stephen J. Dinsmore

## INTRODUCTION

Understanding the dietary composition of nocturnal birds such as owls can reveal important information about their natural history and the vulnerability, distribution, and abundance of prey items (Szucs et al. 2014). Comparative studies of sympatric owls occurring in the same region can reveal patterns of resource partitioning and prey selection (Szucs et al. 2014). Owls are nocturnal birds of prey that generally prefer woodland habitats that abut open grassy fields, which contain most of their prey items (König et al. 1999). Owls typically have a hunting territory near their home roost, are opportunistic, and will eat whatever prey is available in the area (Long 1998). Selected prey items vary depending on the size and species of owl. Smaller owls primarily eat insects or small mammals, whereas larger owls prey upon birds, hares, and many small mammals (König et al. 1999). Understanding the food habits of owls is useful for making decisions about habitat management and conservation. Twelve species of owls have occurred in Iowa of which three are year-round residents, four are primarily migrants and winter visitors, two are rare breeders, and three are vagrants (Dinsmore et al. 1984). We chose two winter visitors (Long-eared [*Asio otus*] and Northern Saw-whet [*Aegolius acadicus*] owls) and one rare breeder (Barn Owl [*Tyto alba*]) as the focus of a comparative food habits study in central Iowa.

The three owl species covered in this study have differing, but slightly overlapping, food habits. The Barn Owl is one of the most widespread land birds in the world (Smith and Murphy 1973) and is known for its versatility in terms of prey selection (Colvin et al. 1984). The Barn Owl feeds primarily on voles, especially meadow (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*), prairie (*M. ochrogaster*) and montane (*M. montanus*) voles (Errington 1932, Wallace and Black 1948, Armstrong 1958, Smith et al. 1972, Marti 1973, Colvin and McLean 1986, Taylor 1994, Young et al. 2005). Barn Owl diets are supplemented with a wide array of small mammals that include moles, bog lemmings, and mice plus birds and even some larger mammals such as rabbits (Errington 1932, Wallace and Black 1948, Smith et al. 1972, Marti 1973, Colvin and McLean 1986). The Long-eared Owl inhabits sparsely forested habitats ranging across North America (Holt 1997). This species is also a vole specialist and supplements its diet with mice (*Peromyscus leucopus* and *P. maniculatus*) as well as other small mammals and various bird species (Voight and Glenn-Lewin 1978, Young et al. 2005, Kitowski 2013). The Northern Saw-whet Owl is locally distributed within a winter range that mainly includes forested areas in the northern United States and southern Canada (Mumford and Zusi 1958). Although not found during the summer months in Iowa, Northern Saw-whet Owls winter in dense vegetation and use early successional woodlands for winter habitat in Iowa (Dinsmore and Clark 1991). The diet of the Northern Saw-whet Owl consists mainly of deer (*P. leucopus*) and white-footed (*P. maniculatus*) mice (Errington 1932, Scott 1938, Weller et al. 1963, McCabe 1972, Swengel and Swengel 1987, Dinsmore and Clark 1991) but this diet can be supplemented with other rodents



Owl species	Name of prey item						Total remains	Total pellets	Mean items per pellet
	PE	MI	RM	SC	BB	OT			
Barn Owl	28	283	63	2	55	1	433	182	2.38
Long-eared Owl	30	49	13	2	0	0	94	66	1.42
N. Saw-whet Owl	72	0	7	2	0	1	82	159	0.52
TOTAL	130	332	83	6	55	2	609	407	1.50

Table 1. Total number of each prey species found in Barn, Long-eared, and Northern Saw-whet owl pellets in central Iowa, 2011-2014. Prey items were *Peromyscus sp.* (PE), *Microtus sp.* (MI), *Reithrodontomys megalotis* (RM), *Sorex cinereus* (SC), *Blarina brevicauda* (BB), and other unidentified items (OT).

that include the western harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*), and rarely birds. The three owl species will all consume small rodents, but Long-eared and especially Barn owls often seek larger prey items in contrast to the more selective Northern Saw-whet Owl.

In this study we used information from owl pellets as an indicator of the food habits of these three owl species in central Iowa. Owl pellets are reliable indicators of diet (Errington 1932, Wallace and Black 1948, Yom-Tov and Wool 1997) and extensive food habit data from the Americas and other regions are derived mainly from pellet analyses. Analyses of owl pellets are more difficult with small owl species because the skulls are more likely to be crushed during consumption (Randle and Austing 1952, Hailman 1963). Problems can also arise when pellets (1) lack a skull for identification, or (2) contain incomplete remains of larger prey items (they may be split between multiple pellets). Nonetheless, pellet analyses are a useful method to describe owl food habits. In this study we used a detailed pellet analysis to compare the food habits of three owl species in central Iowa.

## METHODS

We studied owl food habits at several sites in mostly central Iowa. Pellets were collected below known roost sites of Northern Saw-whet and Long-eared owls and at a known Barn Owl nesting site. Birders monitored owls at sites in Black Hawk, Boone, Polk, and Story counties. All Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owl pellets were collected during the winter months, from January to early April. These pellets were collected in the winters of 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. The Barn Owl pellets were found in a period from September and October 2014 at a single site in Story County.

All pellets were stored in a freezer and then dried on newspaper for 1 week before being sorted. Using tweezers, each pellet was carefully picked apart and all of the bones were removed. Using only skulls and jawbones, we identified each to genus and (in some cases) species. Using two comprehensive identification guides (Glass 1958, Franklin 1987), the skulls' incisors and tooth positioning were examined under a dissecting scope and identified. In some cases it was possible to identify the species while in others the specific identification was not possible due to (a) the similarity with another species, or (b) the condition of the skull was insufficient for identification. For each owl species we tallied the number

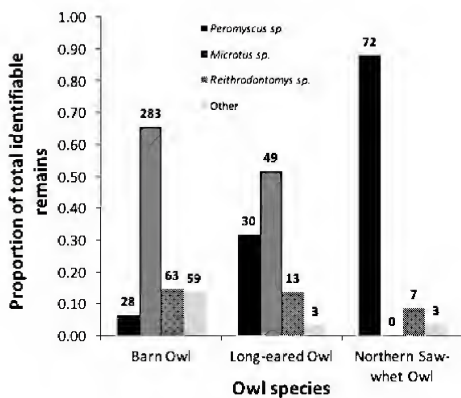


Figure 1. Proportion of identifiable prey remains in the pellets of Barn, Long-eared, and Northern Saw-whet owls in central Iowa, 2011–2014. The number of individual prey items is shown in bold above each bar.

and *R. megalotus* (Figure 1), although we also found several shrews and one bird. The mean number of prey items per pellet was almost four times as much for Barn Owls than for Northern Saw-whet Owls, which was the only species to average less than one item per pellet (Table 1). We found strong diet composition differences between the three species ( $P < 0.01$  for each pair-wise comparison).

## DISCUSSION

Our study findings were consistent with other studies of these three owl species in Iowa and the Midwest. We found that Barn Owls, the largest of these three species, had a much greater proportion of *Microtus* sp. in their diet than either of the other two species. This is consistent with their large body size, which enables them to capture and handle larger prey such as *Microtus*. Our only bird remain was found in a Barn Owl pellet and we believe it was an Icterid, perhaps a Common Grackle. Long-eared Owls had a significant proportion of *Microtus* sp. in their diet, but also consumed *Peromyscus* sp. The Long-eared Owl is intermediate in size between the other two owl species, and not surprisingly its diet consisted of a mixture of small to large prey items. The Northern Saw-whet Owl consumed the greatest proportion of *Peromyscus* sp., which is consistent with an earlier Iowa study (Dinsmore and Clark 1991). *Peromyscus* are a small prey species, so this finding is consistent with the small size of a Northern Saw-whet Owl and its apparent inability to capture and handle larger prey items (e.g., *Microtus* sp.).

A surprising finding in this study was the frequency of *R. megalotus* in the diets of these owls. Despite their small size, a greater proportion of *R. megalotus* were found in Barn and Long-eared owl pellets than in those of the Northern Saw-whet Owl (0.15 and 0.14, respectively, compared to 0.09). This might be due to the distribution of *R. megalotus* in the areas where the owls were roosting. If there are more *R. megalotus* in the areas

of pellets dissected, the total prey items in those pellets, and the number identified to each species or genus of prey. We used a simple chi-square test of proportions to compare diet composition between each pair of owl species. We considered diets to be statistically different at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

Our data included 182 Barn, 66 Long-eared, and 159 Northern Saw-whet Owl pellets. We identified 609 total prey remains from these 407 pellets (Table 1). The mean number of identifiable prey items per pellet was greatest for Barn Owl and least for N. Saw-whet Owl, which matches the pattern seen in the size of each species' pellets (Table 1). Prey items were mostly *Peromyscus* sp., *Microtus* sp.,

frequented by the Long-eared and Barn owls, then they might be expected to have a larger proportion of *R. megalotus* in their diet. This suggests that the size of the owl is not the only factor in determining food habits and that the location, distribution, and the abundance of prey items is also important (Mendell 1944, Marti et. al 1993).

The findings from studies such as ours are helpful for understanding how to manage forested and grassland habitats in Iowa for the benefits of these owl species. Knowing the dietary restrictions and limitations of each owl species can be used to identify good roosting locations and designate protected habitat. Owl pellet studies are not only important for their information about owl species, but also important for their information about small mammal distribution. Many species of rodents are difficult to trap, and therefore it is hard to make good judgments about their distributions. But owl pellet data might be a useful tool for determining the distribution of some small mammals (Purger 2014).

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Field Reports—Spring 2016

*Tyler M. Harms*



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Mars and Sioux City.

April continued the warm pattern despite starting out colder than normal. Temperatures in April averaged 1.0 degree above normal despite falling well below freezing on 9 and 12 April with lows of 13 degrees in Audubon and 16 degrees in Sheldon, respectively. The first half of April started relatively dry. Many rivers and streams reached flood stage in western Iowa as precipitation rebounded in the last half of the month. Average rainfall for the first 18 days of April was 0.57 inches while average precipitation for the last 12 days was 2.68 inches. This resulted in a spike in water levels in most Iowa water bodies including both Saylorville and Red Rock reservoirs.

May was a more typical month weather-wise with both temperature and precipitation within one unit of the long-term average. Temperatures were highly variable, with frost reported at many locations in the first six days of the month followed by temperatures far above average from 6-11 May. This pattern repeated with the final days of the month reaching 80 degrees or higher across much of the state. Similar to temperatures, precipitation oscillated among bouts of above and below average amounts. After above average precipitation in late April, May began as relatively dry. Wet and dry periods continued through the end of May. However, precipitation amounts were highly variable across the state. Above average precipitation prevailed across much of western Iowa with 10.75 inches reported in Atlantic, which was the highest amount recorded in 130 years at this location. Central and

## WEATHER

This spring started with above average temperatures in March, which continued into April and resulted in early leaf-out conditions. March was the 13th warmest on record with temperatures averaging 6.1 degrees above normal. The warmest days of the month were 7, 8, and 14 March with temperatures spiking 20 degrees above normal. Nearly average precipitation of 2.46 inches (0.31 inches above normal) was recorded in March with more than half that amount coming from one rainfall event on 14-15 March. The remainder of the precipitation came in small amounts from scattered events throughout the month. However, one of the most significant snowfalls of the season occurred on 23-24 March in northwestern Iowa with 14 inches or more falling in Le

south-central Iowa were dry, with only 2.19 inches reported in Albia. Despite starting out warm, this spring ended with average conditions across much of the state.

#### HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

Above average temperatures in March and April kick-started the onset of spring with early leaf-out and green-up conditions across much of the state. These conditions were also noted by the birds with an impressive 21 passerine species arriving early this spring. This trend was most pronounced in the swallows with 4 of 6 swallows (Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, and Bank Swallow) arriving early. Flycatchers and warblers were also well represented on the list of “early birds” with 2 species (Yellow-bellied and Alder Flycatcher) and 12 species (Ovenbird, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, American Redstart, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, and Pine Warbler) of each group arriving early, respectively. Well represented by insectivores, this list suggests the early leaf-out conditions likely resulted in early emergence of some insects this spring.

Residual precipitation from winter and average precipitation in early spring resulted in favorable conditions on many of Iowa’s wetlands this spring. This was most certainly the case in northwestern Iowa where much of the state’s precipitation fell in both winter and spring. Not surprisingly, also among the impressive list of early arrivals were shorebirds and other wetland birds. Most arrived in mid- and late April just in time for the plentiful precipitation that fell in the second half of April. Five species of shorebirds (Black-necked Stilt, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Short-billed Dowitcher) arrived on record early dates and three other species (Killdeer, Willet, and Lesser Yellowlegs) arrived far earlier than last year. Similarly, wetland birds such as White-faced Ibis, Common Gallinule, and Forster’s Tern also experienced record early arrivals.

Water levels at both Saylorville and Red Rock reservoirs hovered at normal pool until early May when levels spiked 8-15 feet in response to abundant precipitation in late April. Unfortunately, this was too late to affect the waterbird migration as many species passed through the state on schedule this spring. However, waterbird numbers during migration were much closer to average compared to last year.

#### UNUSUAL SPECIES

As suggested above, the most notable occurrence this spring was the impressive number of early arrivals. A record 36 species arrived among the earliest dates on record this spring, far more than the nine species arriving early last spring. Although this could be a result of the early spring conditions, one must also acknowledge the increased number of reports with the addition of eBird records from across the state. Regardless, this will most certainly be a spring for the record books.

Documentations were submitted for 12 accidental or casual species this spring with most of our rare visitors coming from the west including Burrowing Owl, Say’s Phoebe, Lark Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, and Bullock’s Oriole. We also had a few visitors from the south including Glossy Ibis, Black Rail, and Fish Crow. A Harlequin Duck visited the state for the second year in a row, and a Snowy Plover, Ruff, and Hoary Redpoll complete the list of rarities.



Another significant observation worth mentioning is the unusually high number of Barn Owl reports from this spring. Thirteen reports from 11 counties included 5 nests with eggs. Unfortunately, this also included two birds found dead. Hopefully this is a sign of a recovery of this species in our state.

#### SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **alt** = alternate (plumage), **A** = area, **BBS** = breeding bird survey, **BCA**=Bird Conservation Area, **imm** = immature, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **se half** = diagonal se half, **SF** = state forest, **SL** = sewage lagoons, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Migration peaked one week earlier than last year with a high count of 4000 on 2 Mar at Luton WA *Woodbury* (GLV) and 3500 on 6 Mar at Hendrickson M *Story* (EEO). Last: 2 on 16 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RIA/PHA).

**Snow Goose:** Western Iowa was the hotspot for migration this year with 100,000 on 2 Mar at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (GLV) and 58600 on 8 Mar at Forney L *Fremont* (DAk), which exceeded counts from last year. High counts away from the Missouri R included 6000 on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JM) and 4397 on 13 Mar at Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas* (DAk). A single bird lingered until 30 May at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (SD).

**Ross's Goose:** High: 139 on 8 Mar at

Forney L *Fremont* (DAk). Last: 1 on 30 Apr in Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

**Cackling Goose:** Only 4 reports: 300 on 2 Mar at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TJP), 2 on 2 Mar in *Carroll* (MTW), 2 on 13 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc), and 2 on 2 May in *Pocahontas* (SE).

**Canada Goose:** A report of 1200 on 5 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (TM) was the high count this spring.

**Mute Swan:** A pair of birds spent the spring at Cone M *Louisa* again this spring, observed 1 Mar to 16 Apr (JM, GNH, FB, MP). Reported in 4 other counties: 1 on 22 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 1-2 on 14 May in *Buchanan* (RT, DAK), 1 on 20 May at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc), and 1 on 24 May in *Floyd* (DW).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Reported in 19 counties this spring, mostly in north-central and northwestern Iowa with a high count of 50 on 2 Mar at Sweet M *Bremer* (KL).

**Tundra Swan:** Reports of 1-3 from 5 Mar-13 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CK, OK, KAB/JAB, KMc).

**Wood Duck:** Other than a few overwintering birds, the first reports of the year were 1 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JJM) and Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). A high count of 101 was seen 20 Apr at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc).

**Gadwall:** Counts of 1149 on 15 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAk) and 950 on 19 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (LL, JC, TK). The last bird was seen 31 May in *Emmet* (DAk).

**American Wigeon:** Peak migration occurred 19 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (LL, JC, TK). The next highest count





*Snow Goose, Terry Trueblood Rec Area, Johnson, 7 May 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

was 130 on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JM). Last: 4 on 28 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ).

**American Black Duck:** Reported in 4 counties: 1 on 2 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 2 on 5 Mar at Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE), 2 on 5 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CK, OK), 2 on 12 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (MP), 4 on 29 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (EB), 2 on 30 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc), and 2 on 3 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (BP).

**Mallard:** Migration peaked in early Mar with counts of 5000 on 4 Mar at Owego W *Woodbury* (GLV), 3000 on 6 Mar at Hendrickson M *Story* (EEO), 2210 on 5 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), and 2372 on 15 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK).

**Blue-winged Teal:** First birds of spring seen on 4 Mar at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (POR). High counts were 300 on 28 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (BSc) and 312 on 20 Apr at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc). The last birds were seen 31 May at Marsh Farm W *Dallas* (PF).

**Blue-winged X Cinnamon Teal:** All: singles on 20 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk*

(JB, AB, JG) and 9 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DTh).

**Cinnamon Teal:** Reported in 6 counties, far more numerous than the previous 3 years: 1 on 31 Mar at Bur Oak L *Emmet* (Rachel Vanuasdall fide SJD), 1 on 16 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), 1 on 17 Apr in *Louisa* (RIA/PHA), 1 on 17 Apr in *Boone* (POR, JDJ, MTW, EEO), 1 on 18 Apr at Dewey's Pasture *Clay* (JN), 1 on 26-27 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (m.ob.), 1 on 5 May in *Linn* (JF), and 1 on 15 May at Marsh Farm W *Dallas* (m.ob.).

**Northern Shoveler:** Peak counts of 513 on 15 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK), 300 on 2 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (RJH), and 258 on 13 Apr on the Mississippi R *Jackson* (KMc). Last: 1 on 31 May at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Northern Pintail:** Peak migration carried over from late Feb with 450 on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JM), 3000 on 2 Mar at Luton WA *Woodbury* (GLV), and 500 on 6 Mar at Hendrickson M *Story* (EEO). The last bird was seen 25 May in *Shelby* (DAK).

**Green-winged Teal:** Migration peaked mid-Mar in eastern Iowa with 2200 on 16 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (POR) and 1150 on 17 Mar along the Wapsi R *Chickasaw* (PH). Last: 3 on 30 May at Cone M *Louisa* (FLR).

**Canvasback:** Most: 600 on 14 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Last: 1 on 28 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ).

**Redhead:** Peaks of 550 on 19 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (LL, JC, TK) and 288 on 22 Mar in *Emmet* (DAK). Last on 30 May at Errington M *Polk* (RLC).

**Ring-necked Duck:** A pulse of migrants pushed through Iowa in mid-Mar with 1500 on 14 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 1406 on 8 Mar at Forney L *Fremont* (DAK), and 1229 on 15 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK). The last 2 birds were observed on 30 May at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Greater Scaup:** Reported in 10 counties across the state with a high of 18 on 20 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ) and the last on 26 May at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

**Lesser Scaup:** Most: 2100 on 14 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Last: 3 on 28 May at Marsh Farm W *Dallas* (AB).

**HARLEQUIN DUCK:** A single bird was seen by many from 11-18 May in Waterloo *Black Hawk* (DGE, \*POR-ph, \*PD-BS-ph, m.ob.).

**Long-tailed Duck:** All: 1 on 10 Mar in *Sioux* (POR, JDJ) and 1 on 13 Mar at Big Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Bufflehead:** High counts of 352 at Bulger's Hollow *Clinton* (KMc) and 350 on the Mississippi R *Clinton* (KMc), both on 13 Apr, and 278 on 19 Apr at Silver L *Worth* (DAk). Last: 2 on 21 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAk).

**Common Goldeneye:** Large numbers of overwintering birds continued into early spring with high counts of 530 on 5 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB), 480 on 14 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 200 on 7 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DH) and on 4 Mar at Mud L *Palo Alto* (TM). The last bird of spring was observed on 18 May at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (Rachel Vanausdall fide SJD).

**Hooded Merganser:** The high count was on 5 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Common Merganser:** Far more reports this spring compared to last spring with peak numbers of 1610 on 6 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB) and 970 on 4 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last: 2 on 21 May at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (JMa).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Most: 242 on 10 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last: 2 on 18 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ).

**Ruddy Duck:** Migration appeared to peak in late Mar with 315 on 28 Mar in *Sioux* (JDJ) and 302 on 29 Mar in *Sac*

(DAk), although the high count of 531 was observed on 19 Apr at Silver L *Worth* (DAk). Twelve lingering birds were observed on 29 May at Hendrickson M *Story* (DC).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Reported in 9 counties as populations continue to increase with the northernmost report on 24 May in *Boone* (WO).

**Gray Partridge:** Reports of 1-2 birds in 12 counties north of *Audubon*.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** A high of 49 was observed on 11 Apr in *Buena Vista* (JDJ).

**Ruffed Grouse:** Two reports: 1 on 13 May at Bixby SP *Clayton* and 2 on 22 May in *Fayette* (KCR).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Nine reports, all from *Ringgold*, with high counts of 38 and 37 on 2 Apr and 31 on 5 Apr, all at the Kellerton lek (EEO, DCH, FLR).

**Red-throated Loon:** A single bird was seen by many on 8 May at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (m.ob.).

**Pacific Loon:** A single bird in basic plumage was seen from 11-12 May at Big Creek SP *Polk* (AB-ph, SJD, RLC).

**Common Loon:** This species arrived unusually early this year with several reports among the earliest on record. Single birds were seen at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF) and Little Wall L *Hamilton* (DAk) on 9 Mar, the second earliest report on record. A single bird on 10 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) is now the third earliest on record. Reports of single birds on 16 Mar at Gray's Lake P *Polk* (RIA/PHA) and on 17 Mar in *Johnson* (JM) tied the previous second earliest and third earliest reports, respectively. A report of 23 on 30 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (CJF) was the high count this spring.

**Wild Turkey:** An impressive count of 62 was observed on 5 Mar at Lake Manawa *Pottawattamie* (POR), the high for this spring.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** A pulse of 101



*American Bittern*, Boone, 17 April 2016.  
 Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Black-crowned Night-Heron*, Table M, Woodbury, 5 May 2016. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.

migrants arrived in Iowa on 7 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and migration continued through 13 Apr with 71 at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc).

**Horned Grebe:** The first bird of spring arrived 8 Mar at Nahant M *Scott* (SN) and the last was seen on 15 May at Swan Lake SP *Carroll* (RF).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Ten reports mostly in northern Iowa with the first on 8 Apr at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD) and last on 30 May at Diamond L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Eared Grebe:** Up to 35 birds were observed courting from 2-28 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, JDJ, DAK, POR), a testament to the fantastic habitat at this location. On 30 May, 3 pair were also observed at Grovers L *Dickinson* (LAS), the last report of spring.

**Western Grebe:** A total of 2-3 birds was observed from 8-28 May at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, JDJ, POR). No other reports from spring.

**Neotropical Cormorant:** No reports.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Migration peaked with a notable count of 1100 on 12 Apr in *Sioux* (JDJ). Other high counts included 314 on 9 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 197 on 13 Apr on the Mississippi R *Clinton* (KMc).

**American White Pelican:** Widespread reports from winter continued into early spring. Migration crested in early Apr with 3000 on 3 Apr at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (GLV) and 1049 on the 13 Apr on the Mississippi R *Clinton* (KMc). A total of 25 on 31 May at Credit Island P *Scott* (LL) were the last birds of spring.

**American Bittern:** Several reports of 1-3 birds with the first on 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Least Bittern:** Reported much earlier compared to last spring with the first 2 on 4 May at Table M *Woodbury* (POR). Reported in only 4 other counties.

**Great Blue Heron:** Most: 25 on 7 May



*Cooper's Hawk*, Iowa City, Johnson, 29 April 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Hudsonian Godwit*, Sloan, Monona, 8 May 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

at Otter Creek M *Tama* (WWI).

**Great Egret:** First: 1 on 24 Mar in *Sioux* (JDJ). Most: 31 on 20 May at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc). Last: 1 on 31 May at Credit Island P *Scott* (LL).

**Snowy Egret:** Reported in an unprecedented 10 counties across the state with the first on 7 Apr at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and the last on 25 May in *Linn* (JF).

**Little Blue Heron:** A single bird was observed 27 Apr-1 May in *Cerro Gordo* (m.ob.).

**Cattle Egret:** The first bird of spring was observed on 16 Apr in *Jefferson* (DCP) with a high count of 8 on 28 Apr in *Lucas* (DCH). Last: 1 on 15 May in *Carroll* (RF).

**Green Heron:** Counts of 1-4 birds reported in 10 counties with the first on 20 Apr at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Widespread reports from 12 counties with the first on 20 Apr at Camp Dodge *Polk* (TB) and high of 7 on 5 May at Banner Flats WA *Warren* (JG).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** A single bird was observed on 23, 25 Apr at

Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ, POR), a regular location for this species.

**GLOSSY IBIS:** All: 3 on 3 May at Rapp P *Page* (\*POR-ph) and a single bird seen by many on 13 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (\*LGR, \*MHB, m.ob.).

**White-faced Ibis:** Reported in 11 counties across the state. The first report on 9 Apr in *Greene* (JDJ) was the second earliest report and the second report on 10 Apr at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (POR) tied the third earliest report. Most: 32 on 22 Apr at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (GLV). Last: 1 on 31 May at Cone M *Louisa* (BT).

**Turkey Vulture:** A count of 140 on 25 Mar in *Winneshiek* (DA) was the high this spring.

**Osprey:** Reported in 14 counties north of a line from *Johnson* to *Monona* with the first on 12 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KAB/JAB). The southernmost report was 1 on 16 Mar in *Des Moines* (POR).

**Mississippi Kite:** Only a single report of 2 on 23 May at Ashworth P *Polk* (JB), a regular location for this species.

**Bald Eagle:** A total of 45 on 3 Mar at

Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AC) was the high for this spring, far fewer than the high count last spring.

**Northern Harrier:** Reports from winter continued into spring with 1 in *Des Moines* (VR) and 3 at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), both on 1 Mar. A total of 7 birds was seen on 2 Apr at the Kellerton BCA *Ringgold*, an impressive number to be seen at one time (DCH).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Reports were numerous and widespread this spring with the first on 2 Mar in *Johnson* (SD) and last on 20 May at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (CD).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Reported in 12 counties with the first on 1 Mar in Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Northern Goshawk:** A single bird was found in *Kossuth* on 3 Mar (JN, JDJ, POR-ph).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Reports of 1-2 birds mostly in eastern Iowa with the first on 5 Mar in *Black Hawk* (DGE). The westernmost report was a single bird on 11 May at Ledges SP *Boone* (DTh).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Migration peaked with 35 in *Johnson* (AC) and 31 in Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), both on 23 Apr. The first bird of spring was seen on 16 Apr at Browns L *Woodbury* (GLV) and the last on 31 May at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (EH).

**Swainson's Hawk:** First: Reports of single birds on 23 Mar in *Ringgold* tie the third earliest report (RIA/PHA, JS). Most: 6 on 13 Apr in *Guthrie* (DAK). Last: 1 on 16 May in *Boone* (GK).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** Most: 23 on 3 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AC).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** All: 1 on 3 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AC), 1 on 5 Mar in *O'Brien* (JDJ), 2 on 7 Mar in *Fayette* (PDBS), 2 on 11 Mar in *Cass* (SG), 1 on 12 Mar in Lime Springs *Howard* (LR), and 1 on 9 Apr at the Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (JK).

**Golden Eagle:** Two reports: 1 on 12 Mar at Kettleton Hogsback WA *Dickinson* (LAS, JDJ) and 1 on 3 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (OK, CK).

**Yellow Rail:** A single bird was seen on 5 May at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**BLACK RAIL:** The first spring report in at least 2 years, a single bird was seen on 29 Apr at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (\*NAO).

**King Rail:** Surprisingly, there was only one report: a single bird from 29-30 May at Frazier Bend *Fremont* (FOR, RIA/PHA).

**Virginia Rail:** Reported in 11 counties mostly north of *Tama* with the first on 16 Apr at Hanlontown Sl *Worth* (RGo).

**Sora:** Similar to Virginia Rail, the first birds arrived on 13 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc). A total of 14 on 11 May at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (DAk) was the high for this spring, and the last bird was seen on 26 May in *Cerro Gordo* (DW).

**Common Gallinule:** A single bird on 16 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* tied the second earliest report (TM). Reported in 4 additional counties with the westernmost report on 29 May at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (JN).

**American Coot:** Several reports from winter lingered into spring, although birds were far more abundant this spring than last. High counts included 15060 on 13 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KMc), 4000 on 30 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (BCC), and 1319 on 16 Apr at Sunken Grove *Pocahontas* (DAK).

**Sandhill Crane:** First: 8 on 4 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (GNH). Reported in 17 additional counties mostly east of *Boone* with a high count of 24 on 9 Apr at Sweet M *Bremer* (KCR) and the last on 31 May at Cone M *Louisa* (BT).

**American Avocet:** This species arrived in Iowa in large numbers with 16 on 25 Apr in *Sioux* (JDJ), 40 on 26 Apr at Port Louisa



White-rumped Sandpipers, Dickinson, 7 May 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.



Short-billed Dowitcher, Terry Trueblood Rec Area, Johnson, 17 May 2016. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.

NWR *Louisa* (JBo), and 11 on 26 Apr at Sand L *Marshall* (MP). Last: 2 on 31 May in *Fremont* (BeR).

**Black-necked Stilt:** Reported in 6 counties east of *Story* with the first on 4 Apr at Otter Creek M *Tama* (AS), the second earliest report, and the last on 24 May in *Hardin* (KCR).

**Black-bellied Plover:** First on 26 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (BCC-details). Remaining reports were widespread with the high of 16 on 24 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and last on 25 May at Harrier M *Boone* (MTW).

**American Golden-Plover:** The first birds to arrive were 59 in *Greene* (MTW), 45 in *Sioux* (JDJ), and 29 at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (EEO), all on 27 Mar. The high count was 300 on 18 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (BCC) and the last report was 7 on 18 May in *Clay* (JDJ).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** Single birds were seen by many on 26 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD, \*POR, m.ob.) and on 30 May at Pleasant Creek RA *Benton* (\*JF, \*MHB, m.ob.).

**Semipalmated Plover:** A report of 5 on 7 Apr in *Mills* (KH-details) tied the third earliest report on record. Most: 90 on 19

May in *Appanoose* (TNJ). Last: 1 on 30 May in *Benton* (CJG, AC).

**Piping Plover:** All: 1 in *Greene* (VW) and 1 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RIA/PHA), both on 26 Apr, and 1 on 28 May in *Clay* (POR, LAS, JDJ).

**Killdeer:** Birds were reported nearly two weeks earlier this spring than last, likely due to several birds overwintering and the warm February weather. The first were reported on 1 Mar in *Johnson* (KK), at Cone M *Louisa* (JM), at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and at Water Works P *Polk* (JB). A count of 50 on 19 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (SD) was the high for this spring.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 17 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 20 on 16 May in *Black Hawk* (CJG, AC).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 8 Apr in College Springs *Page* (POR). Most: 45 on 20 Apr at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc). Last: 1 on 28 May in *Sioux* (JDJ).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Numerous reports from across the state with the first on 10 Mar at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (RIA/PHA), high of 70 on 7 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AVG), and last on 26 May in *Cerro Gordo* (DW).

**Willet:** Migration peaked with 60 on 26 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), one week earlier than the peak last spring. The first birds were seen on 11 Apr at Chichaqua Bottoms *Polk* (DCH) and the last on 29 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (HZ).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Similar to Willet, migration peaked in late Apr and early May with an impressive count of 412 on 1 May in *Palo Alto* (JDJ). An early report of 1 on 8 Mar in Ames *Story* (SJD, ties second earliest) was the first for the spring, and the last bird was seen on 29 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BT).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Reported in 9 counties mostly in central and western Iowa with the first on 17 Apr at the Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (TC, JGC).

**Whimbrel:** A single bird on 15 May at Pintail M *Hardin* (TSS) was the only report.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** More numerous in the state compared to last spring, the first birds arrived 11 Apr in *Woodbury* near *Salix* (POR-ph) and at Sandhill L (GLV). A high of 40 was observed on 10 May near Rapp P *Page* (JLF). The last birds lingered until 31 May at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (PF).

**Marbled Godwit:** Reported in 9 counties with the first on 21 Apr at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF, BCC-ph) and last on 18 May at Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS). A large group of 21 was seen on 15 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (DAS).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Reports of 1-3 birds spanned from western to eastern Iowa, all in May, with the first on 10 May at Cone M *Louisa* (SD) and the last on 26 May at Cone M *Louisa* (SN).

**RUFF:** A single female was spotted among 120 Pectoral Sandpipers on 27 Apr in *Louisa* (\*POR-ph).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 12 Apr in *Sioux* (JDJ). Most: 6 on 20 May in *Greene* (MTW). Last: 2 on 25 May in *Shelby* (DAk).

**Sanderling:** Widespread reports from 7 counties with the first on 3 May at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and the last on 29 May at Cone M *Louisa* (SN). An impressive count of 73 was observed on 24 May at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (SJD-ph), which was the highest spring count in the past few years.

**Dunlin:** Migrants arrived *en masse* with 22 at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RIA/PHA) and a single bird in *Fayette* (PDBS), both on 10 Apr. Migration peaked in mid-May with reports of 100-110 from 12-15 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (LGR, MHB). The last birds were observed 30 May at Cone M *Louisa* (CJG, AC).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** Reports of this species are becoming more numerous in spring. First: 3 on 19 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Most: 65 on 17 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last: 4 on 28 May in *Clay* (JDJ).

**Least Sandpiper:** The first birds arrived 2 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and migration peaked with 110 on 1 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). A count of 125 on 28 May in *Clay* (JDJ) was a late-season high, and the last birds were seen on 30 May at Cone M *Louisa* (FLR).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** The first arrived at multiple locations on 28 Apr: Cone M *Louisa* (SN), Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (BCC-ph, MHB), and in *Adair* (DAk). Most: 250 on 29 May in *Monona* (POR). Last: 3 on 30 May at Cone M *Louisa* (FLR).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** First: 1 on 18 Mar at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (RIA/PHA). Most: 500 on 7 May in *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A report of 9 on 10 Apr in *Woodbury* (POR) was the first this spring and tied the second earliest arrival on record. Migration peaked



with 450 on 20 May at Hendrickson M *Story* (EEO), an impressive count. Several birds lingered into the summer months, but the last bird of spring was seen 31 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Western Sandpiper:** A single bird was seen on 1 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB-details), the first spring report of this species in two years.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** A report of 10 birds on 26 Apr at Nicholson Ford M *Marshall* was the first this spring and tied the second earliest report on record (MP-details). Spring migration peaked on 15 May with 18-21 birds at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (AB, DJJ, POR) and ended on 24 May with 4 birds at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DTH).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Reported in 10 counties with the first on 5 Apr at Nicholson Ford M *Marshall* (RIA/PHA) and last on 17 May at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (IS). Dunbar Sl *Greene* hosted impressive numbers this spring with 183 on 26 Apr (MTW) and 105 on 24 Apr (DTH).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Reported much earlier this year than last despite having only one report this winter. First: 3 on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JM). Most: 40 on 10 Apr in *Fayette* (PDBS). Last: 1 on 28 May in *Clay* (DJJ).

**American Woodcock:** A total of 20 reports from 14 counties shows how reports are increasing in spring. The first 8 were seen on 2 Mar in *Jefferson* (DCP) and a high of 9 was reported on 16 Mar at Waterworks Prairie P *Johnson* (POR). An ad with 4 juv on 18 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF) was the last report this spring.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Migration peaked at 42 on 9 May in *Appanoose* (TNJ), with the first bird arriving 14 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (JF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: 3 on 10 May in *Page* (JLF), 1 on 13 May at Dunbar

Sl *Greene* (SJD), 3 on 20 May at Hendrickson M *Story* (SJD), 9 on 26 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DEC), 2 on 26 May at Finn Pond *Greene* (SJD), 2 on 26 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 2 on 26 May in *Monona* (GLV), 2 on 29 May in *Monona* (POR), and 3 on 29 May at Cone M *Louisa* (JF, SN).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Migration began with 3 on 9 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF) and peaked with 55 on 29 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SWO). The last bird of spring was seen on 19 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Franklin's Gull:** An impressive count of 600 on 26 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) was the high this spring and marked the peak of migration. The first birds were reported on 18 Mar at Lake Manawa *Pottawattamie* (JMo) and the last on 27 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTH).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Most: 3000 on 19 Mar at Lake Manawa *Pottawattamie* (JMo, GD, JGr, DD).

**Herring Gull:** Only 11 reports with the high count of 155 on 4 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB).

**Thayer's Gull:** All: 1 on 2-3 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB-ph, JG), 1 on 3 Mar in *Scott* (SN), 1 on 4 Mar at Nahant M *Scott* (JF), 1 on 6 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), and 2 on 19 Mar in *Jackson* (m.ob.).

**Iceland Gull:** A first-cycle bird on 4 Mar at Nahant M *Scott* (JF) was the only report.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Birds from winter lingered into spring with singles reported in 3 counties, including multiple birds at Saylorville Res *Polk*: 1 ad seen 1-3 Mar (RLC, JB), a fourth-cycle on 2 Mar (AB-ph), a second-cycle on 4 Mar (AB-ph), and another ad from 10-16 Apr (AB-ph, CJG, AC). Two reports away from *Polk*: 1 on 3 Mar at Nahant M *Louisa* (SN) and 1 at Cedar L *Linn* on both 6 Mar and 28 Mar (JF).

**Glaucous Gull:** All: 1 from 2-5 Mar



*Burrowing Owl*, Monona, 4 May 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



*Common Nighthawk*, Dallas, 15 May 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RIA/PHA, AB-ph, RLC, WWI) and 1 from 3-4 Mar on the Mississippi R *Scott* (SN, JF).

**Least Tern:** A single report of 4 on 24 May along the Missouri R *Harrison* (POR).

**Caspian Tern:** First: 1 on 17 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (BW). Most: 19 on 13 May at Bussey L *Clayton* (DAK-ph, JE-ph). Last: 2 on 30 May in *Benton* (MHB).

**Black Tern:** Migration started and peaked in May with the first on 1 May at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (JB) and peak of 356 at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and 250 at South Twin L *Calhoun* (TMH), both on 15 May. A group of 54 foraging at Cheever L *Emmet* on 31 May (DAK) was the last report this spring.

**Common Tern:** An early bird was reported on 26 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ). The remaining reports were in May with a high of 40 on 20 May in *Jackson* (KMc), which was also the last report in addition to 1 on 20 May at Cedar L *Linn* (KCR).

**Forster's Tern:** A single bird was first reported on 6 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTH), the third earliest report on record. The same bird was subsequently reported on 7 Apr (JG), which ties the previous third earliest report. Migration peaked with 27 on 2 May in *Sioux* (JDJ).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports were widespread this year coming from 20 counties with the most northeastern report on 1 Mar in *Butler* (BDB).

**White-winged Dove:** A single bird was observed at Joe Junger's feeders in *Sioux* from 21-22 Apr (JDJ).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** A record early report came on 24 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (BR-details). Migration peaked with 16 on 26 May in *Black Hawk* (CJG, AC).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Reported in 10 counties with the first on 6 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (JLF, DAK, BCC, DR).

**Barn Owl:** Reports were more wide-

spread than usual, coming from 11 counties this spring: 1 on 6 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (KR), 1 on 14 Mar in *Ringgold* (JRL), a nest with 9 eggs on 30 Mar in *Decatur* (BE) that ultimately fledged 5 young, 1 on 13 Apr at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), 1 on 2 May in *Clay* (Dan Heissel-ph fide LAS), 1 on 2 May at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (Rachel Vanausdall fide SJD), 1 found dead on 6 May in *Lucas* (Tom Litchfield fide BE), 1 found dead on 15 May in *Boone* (Mike Havlik fide BE), 2 on 17 May in *Washington* (Jerry Redington-ph fide SJD), a pair in a nest box on 20 May in *Washington* (BE), a pair in a nest box on 21 May in *Wayne* (BE), a nest with 12 eggs on 22 May in *Warren* (BE), and an active nest on 23 May in *Warren* (Dan Kilkenny-ph fide SJD).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Reports of single birds from 8 counties with the first on 1 Mar at Artesian L *Carroll* (POR), a lingering bird from winter, and the last on 30 May in *Floyd* (DW).

**Great Horned Owl:** Reported in 8 counties with multiple reports of birds on nests or with young including an ad on a nest on 5 Mar at Dale Maffitt Res *Polk* (RIA/PHA), 3 active nests on 25 Mar in *Johnson* (AC), an ad with 2 young in a nest on 17 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CRE), and an ad with 2 juvs on 26 Apr at Brookside P *Story* (TMH).

**Snowy Owl:** Surprisingly, no reports.

**BURROWING OWL:** A pair was seen from 4-8 May in rural *Monona* (\*DP-ph, m.ob.).

**Barred Owl:** Most: 7 on 22 Mar in *Poweshiek* (EH).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: 1 on 1 Mar in *Clinton* (TN), 1 on 6 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (KR), and 1 on 10 Apr at Whitewater Canyon WA *Jones* (TJ).

**Short-eared Owl:** All: 1 on 5 Mar at Errington M *Polk* (JB), 1 on 10 Mar at Han-

lontown Sl *Worth* (BVL), 6 on 21 Mar at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), 1 on 7 Apr at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), and 1 on 10 Apr at Hanlontown Sl *Worth* (RGo).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** A single bird was observed from 3-9 Mar at Grammar Grove WA *Marshall* (MP, DTH) and 2 from 4-5 Mar at Moorehead P *Ida* (JDJ, KO), both regular locations for this species.

**Common Nighthawk:** First: 2 on 25 Apr in *Warren* (JG). Migration peaked on 17 May with 20 at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (SD).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Two reports: 1 on 10 May at Ross P *Page* (JLF) and 1-3 from 20-21 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (m.ob.).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** Reported in 5 counties south of *Scott* with the first on 22 Apr in *Lee* (TC, MAE) and high of 22 on 6 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (BCC).

**Chimney Swift:** The first bird was observed 14 Apr at Water Works P *Polk* (JB). A high 140 was reported on 13 May in *Linn* (BCC), a typical number and location for this species.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** The first migrant arrived 16 Apr in Fairfield *Jefferson* (DCP), which is the record early date on record. Remaining reports were numerous and widespread across the state.

**Belted Kingfisher:** Most: 10 on 16 Apr in *Clayton* (KK).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Numerous and widespread reports with a high of 45 on 10 May at Huron Island *Des Moines* (KMc).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Reported in 15 counties with the first on 16 Mar in *Polk* (RT) and high of 25 on 9 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (DWe).

**Hairy Woodpecker:** Most: 9 on 27 May in *Cerro Gordo* (EH).

**Northern Flicker:** A high of 40 was



Western Kingbird, Greene, 12 May 2016.  
Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Eastern Bluebirds, Jester P, Polk, 12 April 2016. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.

reported on 6 Apr at FW. Kent P *Johnson* (RJH).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports continue to be more numerous and widespread for this species, coming from 18 counties this spring. A report of 9 on 20 Apr at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc) was the high for this spring.

**American Kestrel:** All: 3 on 1 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JM), 1 on 1 Mar in *Des Moines* (VR), 11 on 3 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (AC), 2 on 9 Mar in *Dallas* (KG), 1 on 30 May in *Muscatine* (CJG, AC), and 1 on 30 May at Deere Dike *Dubuque* (KAB/JAB).

**Merlin:** For the first time in 108 years, nesting was documented for this species in Iowa this spring. A notable two nesting pairs were observed: a pair at Oakland Cemetery *Johnson* first reported on 12 Apr and seen until 22 May (Dan McRoberts fide BCC, m.ob.) and a second pair in *Black Hawk* first reported on 15 May (TSS) and seen again on 26 May (KCR). Single birds were reported in 8 additional counties.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Reports of 1-2 birds from 13 counties.

**Prairie Falcon:** Two reports: 1 on 29 Mar in *Sioux* (JDJ) and 1 on 28 May at Hitchcock Nature Area *Pottawattamie* (NS).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Singles reported in 11 counties with the first on 8 May at Shimek SF *Van Buren* (SN) and last on 28 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** First: 2 on 4 May in *Dubuque* (BP). Most: 10 on 22 May at Effigy Mounds National Monument *Allamakee* (OW).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** A single bird was reported 7 May at Sweet M *Bremer* (TSS, DTM, KCR), which ties the third earliest report on record. Additional reports from 10 counties.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** The first bird arrived on 6 May at the Argyle Junkyard *Lee* (DR) with high counts of 8 at Woodland Mounds State Preserve *Warren* (AB) and 6 at Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (PDBS), both on 30 May.

**Alder Flycatcher:** The first migrant arrived on 11 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (DGE) which ties the third earliest report on record. Migration peaked with 5 on

27 May in *Cerro Gordo* (EH) and lingered into summer months.

**Willow Flycatcher:** Migration commenced earlier this year than last with the first bird seen on 6 May at Mt. Sterling M *Van Buren* (CRE).

**Least Flycatcher:** Migration peaked with 14 on 11 May at Myre Sl *Winnepago* (DAK) with the first on 26 Apr at Lake Anita SP *Cass* (DAK) and last on 31 May in *Marion* (DW).

**Eastern Phoebe:** First on 9 Mar in Mystic *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**SAY'S PHOEBE:** A single bird was first seen on 8 Apr at Swan Lake SP *Carroll* (\*MTW, \*POR) and continued until 14 Apr (m.ob.).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** First: 1 on 26 Apr at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (JBo). Most: 20 on 10 May at Huron Island *Des Moines* (KMc).

**Western Kingbird:** Reported in 5 counties with the first on 8 May in *Monona* (JDJ).

**Eastern Kingbird:** Similar to all other flycatchers, the first bird arrived one week earlier than last spring on 19 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Reported in 9 counties south of a line from *Monona* to *Boone* with the first on 14 Mar in *Ringgold* (JRL).

**Northern Shrike:** Reports from winter lingered into spring with the last on 31 Mar at Owego Wetland Complex *Woodbury* (RWR).

**White-eyed Vireo:** Reported in 10 counties south of *Jackson* and east of *Marion* with the first on 22 Apr in *Jefferson* (DCP). A report of 9 on 6 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (DAK) was the high for this spring.

**Bell's Vireo:** First: 1 on 4 May in *Van Buren* (TC). Subsequent reports were mostly south and east of *Dallas* with a single re-

port on 31 May at Panicum Prairie *Worth* (BVL, RGo) being the exception.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First: 1 on 24 Apr at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (SN). Most: 14 on 7 May at Mines of Spain SP *Dubuque* (RSp).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The first migrant arrived 21 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and the last migrant left 27 May from Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (EH).

**Warbling Vireo:** First on 22 Apr at Otter Creek M *Tama* (CRE) with a high count of 17 on 19 May at Banner Flats WA *Warren* (AMJ).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** Reported in 9 counties with the first on 3 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (BLP) and last on 30 May at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (KGR).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** First: 2 on 26 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (BSc).

**FISH CROW:** A single bird was observed on 9 Apr at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (\*FB).

**Horned Lark:** A handful of small groups lingered from winter with the last report on 31 May at Cone M *Louisa* (BT).

**Purple Martin:** A pair reported 22 Mar in Sabula *Jackson* (EB) was the third earliest report on record. A report of 22 on 10 May in *Washington* (FB) was the high for this spring.

**Tree Swallow:** This species started migration early this year with several record early reports: 1 on 9 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) is the new second earliest report, 2 on 10 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) tied the previous second earliest report and is the new third earliest report, and 1 on 11 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (BSc, LGR) tied the previous third earliest report. Migration peaked late Apr to mid-May with 600 on 26 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ) and 300-450 reported 13 May at various locations in *Clayton* (DAK).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:**



*Wood Duck, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 3 May 2016. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.*



*Blue-winged Teal, Story, 22 May 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Harlequin Duck, Black Hawk, 12 May 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*



*Pied-billed Grebe, Carroll, 9 April 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

*Green Heron, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 19 May 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*







*Northern Goshawk*, Kossuth, 3 March 2016.  
Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



*Spotted Sandpiper*, Big Wall L, Wright, 7 May 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*American Avocets*, Swan Lake SP, Carroll, 4 May 2016. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.



*Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*, Port Louisa NWR, Louisa, 25 May 2016. Photograph by Jessica Bolser, Wapello, IA.



*Say's Phoebe*, Swan Lake SP, Carroll, 8 April 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



*Bewick's Wren*, near Mediapolis, Des Moines, 24 April 2016. Photograph by Bill Ohde, Columbus, IA.



*Worm-eating Warbler*, Shimek SF, Lee, 11 May 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.



*Black-throated Green Warbler*, Lake MacBride SP, Johnson, 14 May 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.





*Western Tanager*, Ledges SP, Boone, 5 May 2016. Photograph by Douglas Harr, Ogden, IA.



*Rose-breasted Grosbeak*, Polk, 29 May 2016. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.



*Blue Grosbeak*, Woodbury, 24 May 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.



*Baltimore Oriole*, Iowa City, Johnson, 30 April 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.



*White-winged Crossbill*, Harrison, 12 April 2016. Photograph by Paul O. Roisen, Sioux City, IA.

The second earliest report on record was a single bird associating with a group of Tree Swallows on 31 Mar at Gitchie Manitou State Preserve *Lyon* (DAK). Migration peaked in mid-May with 30-50 reported 13 May at various locations in *Clayton* (DAK).

**Bank Swallow:** A single bird on 9 Apr at Bartlett L *Fremont* (SJD-ph) was the earliest report on record. Migration peaked with 224 on 8 May in *Woodbury* (PP).

**Cliff Swallow:** First: 3 at Gray's Lake P *Polk* (AB) and 1 in *Cherokee* (POR), both on 11 Apr. Most: 300 on 30 Apr at Cedar L *Linn* (JE).

**Barn Swallow:** First: 1 on 9 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (PEL). Most: 180 on 26 Apr at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ).

**Black-capped Chickadee:** A report of 48 on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc) was the high for this spring.

**Tufted Titmouse:** Reported in 8 counties east of *Polk* with a high of 27 on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Ten reports from 8 counties, a slow spring for this species, with the last on 9 May at Red Haw SP *Lucas* (JVA).

**White-breasted Nuthatch:** Most: 12 on 16 Apr at Arbor L *Poweshiek* (EM).

**Brown Creeper:** Reported in 12 counties east of *Emmet* and south of *Cerro Gordo* with the last on 17 May in *Johnson* (SSh).

**Carolina Wren:** Reported in 9 counties mostly east of *Story* with a single bird reported 24 Apr at Mini-Wakan SP *Dickinson* (DAK) being the exception. The last bird was seen 30 May in *Muscatine* (LEE).

**Bewick's Wren:** This species returned to the Argyle Junkyard *Lee* again this year and was seen from 16 Apr-11 May (m.ob.). Away from this location, a single bird was found on 24, 28 Apr in *Des Moines* (Bill Ohde-ph, \*POR-ph) and from 3-4 May in *Polk* (Don Brown, RIA/PHA, \*AB-ph, JG, SJD).

**House Wren:** First: 1 on 13 Apr at Shimek SF *Lee* (AC).

**Winter Wren:** Reported in 14 counties with the last on 30 May in *Montgomery* (DCD). A single bird on 2 Apr at McIntosh Woods SP *Cerro Gordo* (TMH) was the northernmost report.

**Sedge Wren:** The first migrant arrived 26 Apr at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Marsh Wren:** A single bird on 11 Apr at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (POR, JDJ) was the second earliest report on record. Reports of 14 on 21 May at Rush L *Palo Alto* (DAK) and on 29 May at Spring Run Wetland Complex *Dickinson* (MHB) were the high counts for this spring.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** An impressive fallout of this species occurred on 27 Mar with 32 reported at Greenbelt L *Black Hawk* (CL). The last bird was seen 20 Apr at Syracuse WA *Clinton* (KMc).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** A report of 32 on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc) was the high for this spring and the last bird was seen on 24 May at Pammel SP *Madison* (DAK).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** First: 1 on 14 Apr at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (JBo).

**Eastern Bluebird:** Reports continued from winter with a high count of 22 on 29 Apr in *Muscatine* (KMc).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** A single bird was seen 19 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (LL, TK-ph, JC-ph).

**Veery:** Reported in 12 counties mostly east of *Boone* with the first on 6 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (JM). A single bird on 11 May in *Emmet* (DAK) was the westernmost report.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** Migration started on 3 May with a single bird at Mines of Spain SP *Dubuque* (TM) and peaked with a massive night flight of 50 in *Linn* on 10 May (JE). The last bird was reported 26 May in *Cerro Gordo* (DW).

**Swainson's Thrush:** A single bird on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc) was the second earliest report on record. Migration peaked with an impressive 200 on 7 May along the Raccoon River Valley Trail *Dallas* (JG) and lingered into early June.

**Hermit Thrush:** First: 1 on 7 Mar in *Polk* (UDG). Most: 11 on 8 Apr in *Jones* (TJ). Last: A record late report of an apparently injured bird on 23 May in *Jefferson* (DCP-ph).

**Wood Thrush:** First: 1 on 22 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF). Most: 25 on 7 May at Mines of Spain SP *Dubuque* (RSp).

**American Robin:** Peak of 238 on 31 Mar in *Lyon* (DAk).

**Gray Catbird:** First: 1 on 28 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (MHB). Most: 30 on 28 May at Arbor L *Poweshiek* (AH).

**Brown Thrasher:** First on 29 Mar in *Scott* (RAS).

**Northern Mockingbird:** Reported in 12 counties mostly south of a line from *Sac* to *Tama* with the first on 6 Mar in *Washington* (GNH). A single bird on 7 May at Thelman WA *Fayette* (PDBS) was the northernmost report.

**American Pipit:** Reports were widespread this spring with the first on 8 Mar at Forney L *Fremont* (DAk). Most and last: An impressive count of 250 on 7 May in *Ringgold* (BAB).

**Cedar Waxwing:** A report of 70 on 26 May in *Black Hawk* (CL) was the high for this spring.

**Lapland Longspur:** High counts from late winter continued into early spring with 2500 on 16 Mar in *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 550 on 19 Mar in *Emmet* (DCH). The last birds were observed 2 May in *Dickinson* (DAk).

**Smith's Longspur:** Reports from late winter continued into spring with high

counts of 200-225 reported 26-30 Mar at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, EEO, POR) and 200 on 27 Mar at a different location in *Greene* (MTW). The last bird was observed 8 May in *Woodbury* (JDJ).

**Snow Bunting:** No reports.

**Ovenbird:** A single bird on 20 Apr at Palisades-Kepler SP *Linn* (BSc) tied the second earliest report on record.

**Worm-eating Warbler:** First on 29 Apr at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (KMc). A single bird was observed 30 Apr-11 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (m.ob.), a regular location for this species. Additional reports on 10 May at Littlefield County P *Audubon* (DAk) and 21 May at Cairo Woods WA *Louisa* (DTh).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** First on 31 Mar in *Louisa* (JBo-ph) with the northernmost report on 10 May at Evan's P *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

**Northern Waterthrush:** Migration started on 24 Apr at Hales Sl *Dickinson* (DAk) and peaked with 12 on 7 May at Otter Creek M *Tama* (WWI).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** Impressive numbers of this species again this spring with the first on 27 Apr at Willow-glen Nursery *Winneshiek* (LZL), which tied the record early report on record. The last bird was observed 22 May in *Linn* (JOD). Reports from 14 additional counties. A Blue-winged X Golden-winged hybrid was observed 5 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE, MHB-ph).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** First: 1 on 25 Apr at Pine Valley Nature Area *Jackson* (CRE). Most: 8 on 6 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (DAk). A single female on 18 May at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (LAS) was a late report for that far north.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** First on 9 Apr at Big Marsh WA *Butler* (DGE), nearly 2 weeks earlier than last spring. A report



*Kentucky Warbler, Lacey-Keosauqua SP, Van Buren, 6 May 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Chestnut-sided Warbler, Lake MacBride SP, Johnson, 14 May 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

of 11 on 10 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (BCC) was the high count this spring and the last bird was seen 27 May in *Cerro Gordo* (EH).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Reported in 10 counties north of a line from *Louisa* to *Warren* with the first on 25 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CRE).

**Tennessee Warbler:** A single bird heard singing on 17 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CJG-ph, AC) was the earliest report on record. Migration peaked with an impressive 102 reported 15 May at Brown's Woods *Polk* (AB). The last bird was seen 31 May at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (MP).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (DAK) and at Greenbelt L *Black Hawk* (CL), both on 16 Apr. Last on 20 May in *O'Brien* (JDJ).

**Nashville Warbler:** First: 1 on 24 Apr in *Fayette* (PDBS). Most: 20 on 6 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CRE). Last: 1 on 27 May in *Linn* (JOD).

**Connecticut Warbler:** Reported in 7

counties north of a line from *Polk* to *Johnson* with the first on 7 May in *Black Hawk* (AKO), which tied the second earliest report on record. The last bird was seen 25 May in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Mourning Warbler:** Reported in 7 counties in the central third of the state with the first on 8 May along the Raccoon River Valley Trail *Dallas* (JG), which tied the third earliest report on record. Last on 29 May at Greenbelt L *Black Hawk* (CJG, AC).

**Kentucky Warbler:** First on 26 Apr at Sharon Bluffs SP *Appanoose* (POR). Reported in 8 additional counties south and east of *Madison* with a high count of 7 at Shimek SF *Lee* on 17 May (LGR, BSc) and 29 May (CRE).

**Common Yellowthroat:** First: 1 on 23 Apr in *Black Hawk* (AKO).

**Hooded Warbler:** Reported in 4 counties east of *Boone* in May with the first on 3 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (SD-ph).

**American Redstart:** A single bird on 26 Apr at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (JBo)

was the earliest report on record and a count of 43 on 13 May at Sny Magill WA Clayton (DAK, JE) was the high for this spring.

**Cape May Warbler:** Reports of 1-2 birds in 10 counties in May with the first on 6 May in Polk (JT) and the last on 20 May in Poweshiek (CS).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Reported in 10 counties mostly east of Boone with the first on 29 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (JLF). A single bird on 15 May at Huston P Palo Alto (LAS) was the westernmost report, and a report of 9 on 7 May at Mines of Spain SP Dubuque (RSp) was an impressive count for a single location.

**Northern Parula:** First: 2 on 15 Apr in Van Buren (TC, ME). Most: 7 on 16 Apr (CJG, AC) and again on 6 May (CRE, DAK, DR, BCC) at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren.

**Magnolia Warbler:** All migrants passed through in May and arrived *en masse* on 7 May at Chichaqua Bottoms Polk (WO, MTW), Central P Jones (MP), FW. Kent P Johnson (JM, KL, ACL), Hickory Hill P Johnson (JPa, GS), in Winnebago (RAS), Carney M Polk (DAK), and in Polk (DAK). The last bird was seen on 27 May at Squaw Creek P Linn (JF).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** Reported in 8 counties with the first at Brookside P Story (m.ob.) and in Mills (KH), both on 10 May, and the last on 21 May in Algona Kossuth (MCK).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** A single bird on 25 Apr in Ames Story (TMH) tied the earliest report on record. The last bird was seen on 26 May in Poweshiek (CS).

**Yellow Warbler:** First: A single bird recorded singing on 21 Apr at Water Works P Polk (AB) was the third earliest report on record. Most: 34 on 3 May at Green Island WA Jackson (EB).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** First: 1

at Hawkeye WA Johnson (SD) and 1-2 at Hickory Hill P Johnson (JPa, FLR), both on 4 May. Most: 9 on 10 May and again on 16 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (DR). Last: singles at Arbor L Poweshiek (AH) and in Black Hawk (CJG, AC), both on 28 May.

**Blackpoll Warbler:** A record early bird was seen on 21 Apr in Dallas (MJP-details). Reported in 14 additional counties with the last on 29 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (JB).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** A record early bird was heard singing on 29 Apr in Clinton (BR-details). Two additional reports: 1 on 18 May at Christopherson Sl Dickinson (JDJ) and 1 on 20 May at Eagle Point P Clinton (KMc).

**Palm Warbler:** A record early bird was reported on 15 Apr at Bacon Creek P Woodbury (FLR). Migration peaked with 40 on 24 Apr along the Cedar Valley Nature Trail Black Hawk (CL) and ended with a single bird on 19 May at Sweet M Bremer (CJG, AC).

**Pine Warbler:** A single bird on 28 Mar at the Farmington Unit of Shimek SF Van Buren (POR) was the second earliest report on record. Two additional reports away from Shimek SF: 1 on 15 Apr at Black Hawk P Black Hawk (AKO) and 1 on 16 May at Eagle Point P Clinton (EB).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First: 2 on 9 Mar in Jefferson (ME). Migration peaked in late Apr with impressive counts of 252 on 29 Apr at Green Valley SP Union (DAK), 180 on 25 Apr at Swan Lake SP Carroll (MTW), and 128 on 24 Apr at Hales Sl Dickinson (DAK). Last: 1 on 21 May at Mines of Spain SP Dubuque (CJG, AC).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Widespread reports from 13 counties with the first on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P Clinton (KMc).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** First migrants arrived on 20 Apr in Johnson



*Palm Warbler*, Waterworks Prairie P, Johnson, 2 May 2016. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.



*Clay-colored Sparrow*, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 3 May 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.

(FB). Migration peaked with 7 on 8 May in *Dubuque* (DR) and ended with a single bird on 24 May at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (MP).

**Canada Warbler:** First on 10 May in *Black Hawk* (RH, CL). Last on 31 May at Cedar River Natural Resource Area *Black Hawk* (CJG, AC).

**Wilson's Warbler:** Migration was concentrated in May with the first at Mines of Spain SP *Dubuque* (TM) and Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CRE), both on 6 May. Migration peaked with 6 on 9 May at the Wapsi River Environmental Education Center *Scott* (RAS) and ended with a single bird on 29 May in *Polk* (RT).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Reports mostly from *Lee* with the first on 30 Apr at Shimek SF *Lee* (CRE) and last on 29 May at Shimek SF *Lee* (CRE). Away from *Lee*: 1 on 6 May at Lake Sugema *Van Buren* (CRE), 1 on 20 May at Princeton M *Scott* (KMc), 1 on 21 May at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), and 1 on 25 May at Hendrickson M *Story* (SJD-ph).

**Spotted Towhee:** Four reports all

from western Iowa: 1 on 31 Mar in *Lyon* (DAK), 1 on 11 Apr in *Sioux* (GSt), 2 on 17 May at Oak Grove County P *Sioux* (JDJ), and 1 on 25 May in *Monona* (DAK).

**Eastern Towhee:** First on 7 Mar in *Polk* (UDG).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Reports continued from winter with high counts of 58 on 13 Mar at Errington M *Polk* (RLC) and 33 on 15 Mar at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK) with the last on 2 May at Errington M *Polk* (DTh).

**Chipping Sparrow:** First: 1 on 4 Mar at F.W. Kent P *Johnson* (FLR). Most: 37 on 20 May at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Widespread reports from 23 counties with the first on 24 Apr at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (DGE) and a high count of 11 in *Sioux* on 4 and 8 May (JDJ).

**Field Sparrow:** Reported in 15 counties south of a line from *Black Hawk* to *Cass* with the first on 12 Mar in *Jefferson* (MAE) and high of 30 on 6 May at Jacob Krumm Nature Preserve *Jasper* (CS).



*Grasshopper Sparrow, Dunbar Slough, Greene, 16 May 2016. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Swamp Sparrow, Harrier M, Boone, 8 May 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Vesper Sparrow:** First: 1 on 15 Mar in *Kossuth* (DAK). Most: 8 on 21 May in *Grundy* (CL, RH).

**Lark Sparrow:** First migrant arrived on 13 Apr along the *Sauk Rail Trail Sac* (EBL). A count of 8 on 19 May at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (MHB) was the high for this spring.

**LARK BUNTING:** A single bird was seen on 14 May at *Hallett Pits Sac* (\*RF).

**Savannah Sparrow:** First on 8 Mar at *Forney L Fremont* (DAK). A total of 39 on 2 May at *Engledinger M Polk* (RLC) was an impressive count for a single location.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Reported in 14 counties, nearly twice the number of counties than last year, with the first on 19 Apr and high count of 20 on 7 May, both at *Neal Smith NWR Jasper* (KVS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Numerous widespread reports, an uplifting trend for this grassland specialist, with the first on 23 Mar at *Kellerton BCA Ringgold* (JOS). Counts of 20 on 7 May at *Mines of Spain SP Dubuque* (RS) and on 24 May at *Neal Smith NWR*

*Jasper* (KVS) were impressive counts for a single location.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Three reports of this uncommon spring migrant: 1 on 23 Mar at *Black Hawk SP Sac* (EBL-ph), 1 on 2 May at *Christopherson Sl Dickinson* (DAK), and 1 on 8 May in *Woodbury* (JDJ).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** No reports.

**Fox Sparrow:** Migrants began moving through the state on 1 Mar in *Benton* (RM) and peaked in late Mar with 37 on 31 Mar in *Lyon* (DAK) and 30 on 22 Mar in *Sac* (EBL). Last: 1 on 15 Apr at *Cone M Louisa* (BCC).

**Song Sparrow:** First: 1 on 1 Mar in *Benton* (RA). Most: 46 on 12 Mar at *Green Island WA Jackson* (KAB/JAB).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** There were several reports this spring (without details) from mid- to late March. Typical arrival dates for this species are closer to mid-April and at least some of the early reports may pertain to Song Sparrows. Good photographs are needed to document this species arrival in Iowa in March. Migration began on 29 Mar at *DeSoto*





*Bobolink*, Harrier M, Boone, 26 May 2016.  
Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA



*Yellow-headed Blackbird*, Harrier M, Boone, 12 May 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

NWR *Harrison* (RC, JGu, MJ) and ended with 1 on 22 May at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Swamp Sparrow:** First on 6 Mar at *Deere Dike Dubuque* (KAB/JAB). Most: 42 on 19 Apr in *Winnebago* (DAk).

**White-throated Sparrow:** This regular winter species lingered well into spring with high counts of 133 on 5 May at *Pilot Knob SP Winnebago* (DAk) and 105 on 8 May at *Hartman Reserve Black Hawk* (DGE). The last bird was observed 21 May at *Mines of Spain SP Dubuque* (CJG, AC).

**Harris's Sparrow:** Reports continued from winter with a high of 142 on 8 May along the *Raccoon River Valley Trail Dallas* (JG) and last on 24 May at *Pammel SP Madison* (DAk).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Timing of reports similar to Harris's Sparrow although birds were far less numerous. High count of 29 on 29 Apr in *Muscatine* (KMc) and last on 30 May at *Table M Woodbury* (GLV).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Most: 100 on 10 Apr in *Boone* (EEO). Last: 1 on 5 May at *Nelson WA Chickasaw* (DAk).

**Summer Tanager:** Reported in 12 counties south of a line from *Sac* to *Johnson* with the first on 26 Apr at *Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren* (BSc).

**Scarlet Tanager:** First on 26 Apr at *Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren* (BSc).

**WESTERN TANAGER:** An ad male was photographed on 5 May at *Ledges SP Boone* (\*DCH-ph).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** First on 20 Apr near *Burlington Des Moines* (KM, BWi).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:** An ad male was seen from 11-12 May at *Curt Nelson's Farm Cerro Gordo* (\*BVL-ph, \*PH-ph, \*POR-ph, \*RGo-ph, CJF).

**Blue Grosbeak:** First on 21 Apr in *Adair* (DAk) was the earliest report on record. Reported in 9 additional counties mostly west of *Cerro Gordo* with a single bird on 29 May at *Shimek SF Lee* (CRE) being the easternmost report.

**Indigo Bunting:** A single bird was photographed on 20 Apr near *Burlington Des Moines* (KM-ph, BWi-ph), which tied the earliest report on record.



*Rusty Blackbird*, Bjorkboda M, Hamilton, 20 April 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*Great-tailed Grackle*, Snake Creek M, Greene, 26 May 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**Dickcissel:** First bird arrived on 28 Apr in *Pottawattamie* (KH-ph), about one week earlier than last spring.

**Bobolink:** First: 1 on 25 Apr in *Iowa* (BR). Most: 45 on 20 May in *Union* (POR).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** At least 2 birds were heard singing on 28 Feb and reported on 2 Mar at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), which was the earliest report of this species on record. Reports statewide indicate this species may be continuing to expand its range.

**Western Meadowlark:** Reported in 20 counties mostly west of *Johnson* with the first on 3 Mar at Pin Oak M *Lucas* (DR). A single bird on 20 Apr in *Scott* (KMc) was the easternmost report.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Widespread reports in 21 counties with the first on 27 Mar at D.U. M *Clay* (Rachel Vanausdall fide SJD).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Migration began with 8 on 2 Mar at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (JBo) and peaked with 500 on 14 Mar at Eagle Lake WA *Hancock* (PH). Reported in

18 additional counties with the last on 19 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (SD).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Reported in 17 counties, far more widespread than last spring, with the first on 5 Mar at Chichaqua Bottoms *Polk* (DTh) and last on 30 Apr in *Johnson* (DaW).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Reported in 9 counties with the first 3 on 8 Mar at Water Works P *Polk* (JB).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Reports continued from winter with a high of 470 on 9 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (DAk).

**Orchard Oriole:** First on 29 Apr at Klum L *Louisa* (KMc).

**BULLOCK'S ORIOLE:** A single bird was seen in Betty Lucas' yard *Cerro Gordo* from 1-3 May (\*BVL-ph, \*PH-ph, \*POR-ph, \*RGo-ph, CJF, RIA/PHA).

**Baltimore Oriole:** First on 24 Apr in *Lee* (TC).

**Purple Finch:** Reported in 11 counties with the last on 10 May in *Johnson* (DW).

**Red Crossbill:** All: 2 on 4 Mar in *O'Brien* (DH), 4 on 15 May in *Clay* (LAS),

and 1-4 from 13-21 May in *Cherokee* (DB).

**White-winged Crossbill:** All: 1 on 4 Mar in *O'Brien* (DH) and 1 on 10, 12 Apr in *Harrison* (CAW, POR).

**Common Redpoll:** All: 1 from 3-7 Mar in *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 2 on 9 Mar in *O'Brien* (JDJ), 1-20 from 12-13 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (UDG, RLC, DTh), and 1 on 26 Mar in *Madison* (SB).

**HOARY REDPOLL:** One was photographed in a yard in Badger *Webster* on 7 Apr (\*Clayton Will-ph).

**Pine Siskin:** Numerous reports from 16 counties with a high of 25 on 13 Apr at Eagle Point P *Clinton* (KMc).

**American Goldfinch:** Most: 32 on 19 May in *Emmet* (DAK).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Reported in 9 counties with 1-2 on 17 Apr at Otter Creek M *Tama* (POR, MP) being the easternmost report and 1 on 4 Apr at Newport Mills Access *Jones* (CRE) the northernmost report.

#### ADDENDUM

The following sighting was inadvertently omitted from the winter 2015-2016 report:

**Summer Tanager:** One frequented a feeder from 18 Dec 2015 to 10 Jan 2016 in West Des Moines *Polk* (Linda MacBride, ph).

#### CONTRIBUTORS

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David Adair	DA	eBird reporter	Carla Delucchi	CD	eBird reporter
Danny Akers	DAK	Spirit Lake	Stephen J. Dinsmore	SJD	Ames
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Gianna Anania	GA	Cumming	Seth Dudley	SD	Iowa City
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## CONTRIBUTORS

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Ken Lowder	KL	Iowa City	Linda Rudolph	LGR	Coralville
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# Report of the Records Committee for 2015

*Paul Hertzell*

A total of 33 records submitted in 2015 were reviewed by the committee, with 31 pertaining to events during the calendar year 2015 and 2 records from the past. Of this total, 29 records were accepted by the committee and 4 were not accepted. The committee appreciates the efforts of those who document Iowa's bird life and regards each record as deserving thoughtful, careful treatment in its review.

Committee members for 2015 with years in which their terms expire were: Aaron Brees (2015), Matthew Keene (2016), Jay Gilliam (2017), Ann Johnson (2018), Bill Scheible (2019), Karen Viste-Sparkman (2020), and Paul Hertzell (secretary, appointed by the committee). Paul Skrade was nominated by the committee and subsequently appointed by the Board of Directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2016 and replacing Aaron Brees whose term expired at the end of the year.

There were several important changes to the Iowa state list in 2015. A Brown Booby found in September at Red Rock Reservoir [Dinsmore 2016] became the 427th species on the Iowa checklist. The evidence for Boreal Owl was upgraded to "specimen" with the discovery of a recently mounted bird in the collection at Dordt College [Hertzell and De Haan 2015]. Also, Spotted Towhee was confirmed as a breeding species when an adult was photographed feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird in western Iowa [Jungers 2015].

There were three status changes made to species on the state checklist. The assignment of status is based on the number of reports during the previous ten years. A "Regular" species is one in which there are reports in 8, 9 or 10 of the most recent 10 years. A "Casual" species is one in which there are reports in from 3 to 8 years, and an "Accidental" species is one in which there are reports in 3 or fewer years. After discussing inconsistencies in the assignments of status classifications, the committee approved the following changes at the annual meeting on 25 October 2015:

From Casual to Regular: Lazuli Bunting. Recorded in 8 of the last 10 years including ten distinct records just since 2011, Lazuli Bunting appears to have arrived as a regular species.

From Accidental to Casual: Mottled Duck and Gyrfalcon. Since its initial discovery in the state in 2006, Mottled Duck now has been found five times including records in three of the last four years. Gyrfalcon has been found in four of the last ten years.

Each record reviewed by the Committee is assigned a six-digit number (year and sequence number) which is included in this report for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation) and NA = Not Accepted. In order to be accepted, a record must receive 7 votes on the initial review or more than 5 votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R reflect the majority's opinion and indicate that physical evidence supports the identification. References to *IBL* are the page of the Field Reports or a special note in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details.

In the past, a separate photo file was maintained by the Records Committee. With a significant increase in accompanying digital images, photos are now being archived as a part of the associated documentation and are not assigned a separate number. The classification **A-P** in the entries below indicates the presence of an identifiable photo with a record.

#### 2015 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** 4 on 13 May at a rural pond in *Fremont* (2015-10, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:86); 2 from 15–21 Jun at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center *Scott* (2015-16, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:125, *IBL* 85(4) cover); 1 from 7–20 Sep at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (2015-20, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 86:5).

**Mottled Duck:** 26 Apr at Dunbar Slough *Greene*, Iowa's 6th record (2015-05, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 85:87).

**Brown Booby:** 1 adult female on 3 Sep at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion*, Iowa's first record (2015-19, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:146, *IBL* 86:8, 86(1) cover, [Dinsmore 2016]).

**Glossy Ibis:** 25 Apr at Luton WA *Woodbury* (2015-14, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:91); 27 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (2015-09, **A-P**

7-0, *IBL* 85:91). This is the seventh year in the last decade in which Iowa has had accepted records of this species.

**Black Vulture:** 22 May at Jester P *Polk*, Iowa's 8th record (2015-11, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:91; Figure 1).

**Whimbrel:** 3 on 11 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (2015-15, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 85:130).

**Red Knot:** 1 basic adult from 2–6 Oct at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (2015-23, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 86:12, 19)

**Ruff:** 1 adult female on 2 May at Sand Point of Hawkeye WA *Johnson*, Iowa's 20th record (2015-08, **A-P** 7-0, *IBL* 85:94).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** 1 intermediate morph juvenile from 3–9 Oct at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion* (2015-24, **A-D** 7-0, *IBL* 86:13).



Figure 1. *Black Vulture*, Jester P, Polk, 22 May 2015. Photograph by Nicole Werth, Springfield, MA.



Figure 2. *Burrowing Owl*, near Arthur, Ida, 25 April 2015. Photograph by Don Poggensee, Ida Grove, IA.



**Black-headed Gull:** 1 juvenile on 28 Nov at Saylorville Reservoir *Polk* (2015-31, A-D 6-1, 7-0, IBL 86:13-14).

**California Gull:** 1 juvenile on 13 Sep at Red Rock Reservoir *Marion* (2015-21, A-P 7-0, IBL 86:14).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** 1 3rd-cycle on 11 Jan at Lock & Dam 14 *Scott* (2015-02, A-D 6-1, 7-0, IBL 85:49); 1 1st-cycle on 8-10 Feb at Cedar L *Linn* (2015-03, A-P 7-0, IBL 85:49).

**Burrowing Owl:** 25 Apr at rural Arthur in *Ida* (2015-04, A-P 7-0, IBL 85:97; Figure 2).

**Anna's Hummingbird:** 1 adult female on 16-17 Nov at a feeder in Des Moines *Polk*, Iowa's 2nd record (2015-27, A-P 6-1, 7-0, IBL 85:147, IBL 86:15-16).

**Lewis's Woodpecker:** 28 Nov at Diamondhead Lake *Guthrie*, Iowa's 5th record (2015-29, A-D 7-0, IBL 86:16).

**Say's Phoebe:** 27 Dec at Broken Kettle Grassland *Plymouth* (2015-32, A-D 7-0, IBL 86:56, 69, 82).

**Vermilion Flycatcher:** 1 adult male on 21 Nov at Winterset *Madison*, Iowa's 7th record (2015-26, A-P 7-0, IBL 86:17, 20).

**Clark's Nutcracker:** 5 Oct at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (2015-25, A-D 7-0, IBL 86:18). This is the seventh year in which this species has been recorded in Iowa, and the first since 2007.

**Townsend's Warbler:** 22-23 Aug near Center L *Dickinson*, Iowa's 4th record (2015-18, A-P 7-0, IBL 86:27, IBL 86(1) back cover).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** 2 Oct at River-ton WA *Fremont*, record late date (2015-22, A-P 6-1, 7-0, IBL 86:25).

**Western Tanager:** 1 adult female on 21 May at a feeder in Spirit Lake *Dickinson* (2015-12, A-D 7-0, IBL 85:107).

**Lazuli Bunting:** 25-28 Apr at a feeder n of Glenwood Mills (2015-06, A-P 7-0,

IBL 85:107); 15-17 May at a feeder in Carroll *Carroll* (2015-07, A-P 7-0, IBL 85:107).

**Painted Bunting:** 1 adult male on 7 Jun at a feeder in *Wright* (2015-17, A-P 7-0, IBL 85:139). This is the 7th record in the last 10 years.

**Pine Grosbeak:** 2 females/immatures from 21 Nov 2015-13 Feb 2016 at Sheldon Cemetery *O'Brien* (2015-28, A-P 7-0, IBL 86:22, 31).

#### RECORDS FROM THE PAST ACCEPTED

**Boreal Owl:** A specimen collected in *Sioux* in early 2013 was mounted in 2014 and entered into the museum collection at Dordt College, Sioux Center (2015-AB, A-S 7-0, [Hertzel and De Haan 2015]).

#### 2014 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Clark's Grebe:** Although there were several photos of this bird, two committee members felt the evidence was not conclusive for separating the species from a possible hybrid involving Western Grebe. After second round discussions, a third member was persuaded to agree with them (2015-30, NA 5-2, 3-4).

**Clark's Nutcracker:** A description of a brief sighting from a considerable distance left two committee members with too much room for reasonable doubt. Following extensive discussion, a majority joined them (2015-33, NA 5-2, 2-5).

**European Goldfinch:** Photos of a bird visiting a yard feeder were definitive, but the species is not established here and occurrences are presumed to be of escaped individuals (2015-13, NA 0-7).

#### RECORDS FROM THE PAST NOT ACCEPTED

**Great Gray Owl:** Although the description was appropriate and the sighting occurred during the winter of 2005-06

which involved an invasion of northern owls, reviewers could not tell the extent to which the report was based on 10-year old memories. As a result, several committee members declined to accept the record as beyond reasonable doubt (2015-AA, NA 3-4).

Many of the above records were accompanied by excellent photos, which is a recent and helpful trend in the culture of recording contemporary bird life. Oftentimes a snapshot (or recording) picked up on a smartphone may provide just enough corroboration for acceptance. Some of the documentations were accompanied by marginal photos, which are still very helpful and make an important point of discussion if the review goes to a second round. A few had no photos. Written documentations with no photos are more difficult to evaluate and, as a lower level of evidence, require more detail and logic to be accepted

for use by future researchers. In this case, the committee can only consider the picture painted in words describing what was seen and how it was identified. Therefore, reviewers place great value on written notes taken at the time of observation, that is, careful details of an event recorded prior to consultation with a field guide or colleagues after the bird is out of view. This level of detail is seldom seen in listserv posts or the routine comments submitted with seasonal field reports. A summary of size, structure and behavior, along with a description of the event itself and a consideration of any similar species can make all the difference between an accepted report and a report not accepted. The committee only evaluates the evidence that is submitted. Its purpose is not to pass judgment on the validity of a particular sighting or the birding skills of a reporter but rather on that evidence provided.

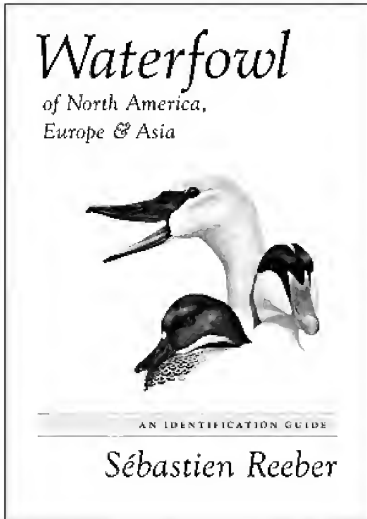
#### LITERATURE CITED

- Dinsmore, S. J., 2016. Brown Booby at Red Rock Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 86:1–2.  
Hertzel, P. and R. De Haan, 2015. A Boreal Owl specimen from Northwestern Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 85:39–40.  
Jungers, J. 2015. First nesting record for Spotted Towhee in Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 85:121.

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# Book Review

Kevin T. Murphy



*Waterfowl of North America, Europe, & Asia: An Identification Guide* by Sébastien Reeber. 2015. 656 pp., 72 color plates, Princeton, New Jersey, ISBN 978-0-691-16266-9, \$45.00 (hard cover).

Waterfowl possess many characteristics that make them a subject of study for both new and seasoned birders alike. Waterfowl are easily observed and accessible, most have beautiful plumages and charismatic behaviors, and many participate in spectacular scenes of migration. For the dedicated observer there are plenty of opportunities to challenge their identification skills with variations in plumage and even hybridization. It is not hard to see why so many birders have a love affair with waterfowl!

Sébastien Reeber ambitiously chose to include 83 species of Holarctic waterfowl in this text as the sole author as well as the artist for all 72 plates (920 color drawings in total). Three editions of this volume, originally in French, were released with this edition coming to North America in 2016. In addition to the 83 nominate species mentioned above Reeber has also included more than 100 hybridizations regularly observed in the field, which makes this an unusually comprehensive work.

Like many reference guides, this book begins with introductory sections addressing the organization of the book and a suite of topics relevant to waterfowl biology. Reeber gives a quick orientation on taxonomy, molts, plumages, and hybridization in waterfowl that is helpful as either a quick lesson or refresher before moving on to the rest of the information. His information on molt and defining the terms used to describe molt is especially thorough, rightfully so given how important molt can be in determining the variable appearance of many species.

The next section in this book contains Reeber's excellent plates. The layout is straightforward and easily interpreted with descriptions of each individual drawing and range maps on the left hand pages, and the color plates on the right hand pages. Each species gets a thorough treatment with proper representations of plumages specific to age, sex, and breeding season as appropriate, including different postures and illustrations of spread wings from birds in flight. On top of having well-drawn plates for nominate species, Reeber also has provided representative drawings for many common hybrids that occur for species on each page, and even has whole plates dedicated to hybrids (plates 39-40 and 53-54 are hybrid-only plates that I especially enjoyed).

The bulk of the content comes from the written species accounts (more than 400 pages of text). Reeber has written very well-researched species accounts that incorporate the most current knowledge on topics like geographic variation in appearance or genetics, population history or trends, history of taxonomic changes, morphological measurements (down to the subspecies level where subspecies are recognized), and a description of known hybridizations with each species. Representative color photos (>650 photos in total) accompany all but one species account, the likely extinct Crested Shelduck, which is only known from a small handful of museum specimens with no confirmed sightings in modern times. Reeber still provides a drawing of this distinctive species (Plate 22). Just shy of 1400 references are included after the species accounts, making this text especially useful for those interested in conducting research or further examining scientific literature associated with much of the information presented. An index of hybrids and where they are found in the text follows that as well as an index of all species mentioned.

Overall, I found *Waterfowl of North America, Europe, & Asia: An Identification Guide* to be full of great information and very enjoyable to read. It is a bit bulky and contains more information than is probably useful for a field guide, but any serious waterfowl enthusiast should find something to enjoy about it. It makes a fantastic reference and research guide! I especially liked the wealth of information included on waterfowl hybridization and Reeber gives a great summary of known hybridizations all accessible in a single work. The only slight criticism I can make (and I had to think quite a bit to come up with one) is that I prefer to have range maps accompany written species accounts rather than plates, but that is purely a matter of personal preference and ultimately very inconsequential. Overall, this is a well-written text on waterfowl that will make a fine addition to the library of a waterfowl enthusiast.

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# Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life

James J. Dinsmore

The lead article in the September 1966 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* was an analysis of 12 years of winter bird count data collected in Greenwood Park in Des Moines by Woodward Brown. More than 4800 birds were counted on 357 days. His analysis showed that the number of individuals of the four most common native species (Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Downy Woodpecker) declined in the last six years of the counts while the number of House Sparrows and European Starlings increased.

The next two articles were by Iowa State University students. In one, Barton Sutter described his experiences watching birds at Elk Creek Marsh in Worth County. The big surprise was a lone American Avocet that gave him a chance to carefully watch its foraging behavior. He also watched a group of Semipalmated Sandpipers and several Red-headed Woodpeckers. In the other article, Richard Knight described the avifauna of Sheeder Prairie in Guthrie County, one of Iowa's first prairie preserves. Most of the birds that he found were associated with shrubs that were found along the edge of the prairie and few true prairie species were found.

The I.O.U. fall meeting was held in September near Vinton and was co-sponsored by the local Izaak Walton League chapter. The 73 attendees enjoyed an evening program which featured eight individuals with films, slide presentations, or short talks on various topics. The usual field trips found 87 species of birds.

The field reports for summer 1966 included reports of nesting Double-crested Cormorants near Clinton, nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons in Greene County and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons near Princeton, the best year for Northern Bobwhite in at least 10 years, and nesting Broad-winged, Red-shouldered, and Swainson's hawks.

Among the short notes was one by Richard Knight describing a Swainson's Hawk nest he and several others (including Barton Sutter) found north of Ames. He noted that there had been several reports of nesting Swainsons Hawks in Iowa in the previous decade. In another note, Fred Kent found a Double-crested Cormorant nest at Coralville Reservoir, a rarity in Iowa at that time. As a footnote, curious about what happened to Barton Sutter, I learned that he eventually developed a career as a writer and poet in Duluth and was named Duluth's first Poet Laureate!

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## IOU Constitutional Amendment Proposal

This proposed amendment, to be introduced to the membership at the IOU spring meeting, gives standing committee status to the events and communications committees. This will provide these committees some stability as they plan ahead.

### ARTICLE V—COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committees shall be standing or ad hoc. Standing Committees shall include Membership, Records, Publications, Projects, **Events**, **Communications**, and Historical/Library. Appointments to standing committee shall be approved by the Board of Directors. Ad hoc committees may be created or dissolved by the President, and such committees shall dissolve at the end of the term of that President. The Board of Directors or the membership voting at a meeting may require the creation or dissolution of an ad hoc committee.



*American Coot, Swan L, Carroll, 9 April 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Smith's Longspur, near Cone M, Louisa, 17 April 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Yellow-breasted Chat, Hendrickson M, Story, 25 May 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$20, Institutional (domestic) \$30, Institutional (foreign) \$45, Goldfinch (electronic IBL only) \$25, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer. Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Cecille Thompson, 7503 Wildflower Ct., Johnston, IA 50131 ([cnthomps@acm.org](mailto:cnthomps@acm.org)).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue (Vol. xx[1])**, **April 1 for spring issue [2]**, **July 1 for summer issue [3]**, **October 1 for fall issue [4]**. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** **Spring: 5-7 May 2017, Chariton.**

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Pileated Woodpecker, Jester P. *Polk*, 16 April 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** White-winged Dove, *Hospers*, Sioux, 22 April 2016. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

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# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



Fall 2016 . Volume 86 . Number 4



## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Letter from the Editor

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

The editor of *Nebraska Bird Review*, Janis Paseka, once asked me if the editorship of *Iowa Bird Life* came with a “life” sentence. I assured her that would not be the case when I assumed the role in 2010. Now, after seven years as editor I have decided that a host of personal and work commitments have left me with too little time to invest in the journal. It is time for some new ideas and fresh faces. The publication of this issue marks my last as editor. I am honored to have followed in the steps of previous editors Fred Pierce (1931–1960), Peter C. Petersen (1961–1985), Thomas H. Kent (1986–1989), James J. Dinsmore (1990–1999), and Kayleen A. Niyo (2000–2009). I am likewise pleased introduce the new editor of *Iowa Bird Life*, Karen Viste-Sparkman. Karen will take the helm beginning with Volume 87 and I’m sure she will provide more information about her background and new ideas for the journal in her first issue. Welcome, Karen!

A journal like *Iowa Bird Life* requires a lot of work from many volunteers. This begins with the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union (IOU) Publications Committee. Ann M. Johnson, chair of the committee during my tenure as editor, deserves special thanks for coordinating the committee’s activities, which included the annual budget and other procedural activities. A big thank you to everyone who contributed regular material for the journal. This includes the field reports editors (Aaron Brees, James J. Dinsmore, Tyler M. Harms, Paul



Figure 1. Stephen J. Dinsmore and Lena E. Dinsmore, Runnells WA, Marion, 6 August 2017. Photograph by Kevin T. Murphy, Ames, IA.

Hertzell, Matt Kenne, and Francis L. Moore), who are tasked with vetting and summarizing hundreds of submissions to produce the thorough and insightful reports that appear in the journal. They also write or contribute to seasonal bird summaries that also appear in *North American Birds* in the Iowa-Missouri Region. Many thanks to Chris Caster for his thorough summary of the annual Christmas Bird Counts, complete with meticulous tables documenting the species, count effort, and weather data. Many others contributed articles or short notes about rarities, and I thank those individuals for their contributions. I am also grateful to officers of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU), especially the secretary, for summarizing bi-annual business and board meetings to be published in *Iowa Bird Life* as required by IOU by-laws. And I owe a big thank you to the regular photo contributors. By my count >50 individuals submitted one or more photos for consideration, although a smaller group of individuals contributed multiple images for almost every issue. This core group included Mark Brown, Larry Dau, Paul Roisen, James Scheib, and Richard S. Wacha. Their colorful images of Iowa's birds certainly brightened up the pages of *Iowa Bird Life*. Thank you! Lastly, I am indebted to James J. Dinsmore for his tireless work to compile the annual index for each issue, and for his critical review of each issue before it went to press. Having a second set of eyes check everything definitely helps to reduce the number of printed errors.

I also thank the core of technical experts who helped me publish each issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. Special thanks to Debbie Marshall of Marshall Desktop Publishing, Inc. in Evergreen, Colorado, for her design and layout services. She deserves credit for giving the journal an attractive and professional appearance, and I am truly grateful for her punctuality, attention to detail, and willingness to work with my busy and sometimes tight publication schedule. Judy Robinson and later Andy Gontar of Centennial Printing in Louisville, Colorado, printed every issue on or ahead of schedule. Connie and Bruce Chiddister at MailGraphics in Boulder, Colorado, then mailed the journal to IOU members and shipped extra copies to the IOU membership coordinator. Finally, I appreciate the help from Rich Beachler, a retired graphics specialist from Iowa State University, who provided the many excellent maps that were used in the journal. It was a pleasure to work with such a great team!

I am pleased to leave *Iowa Bird Life* in the capable hands of Karen Viste-Sparkman and a core of regular article contributors and photographers. I look forward to continuing to explore Iowa's varied habitats in search of birds, now that I have a little more free time! I'd also like to help mentor the next generation of Iowa birders (Figure 1), recognizing their future roles (I hope!) with the IOU and other bird-related activities in Iowa and beyond. Ciao.

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# Merlins nesting in eastern Iowa

*Brandon Caswell, Tom Schilke, and Stephen J. Dinsmore*

In this article we describe two separate nesting attempts by Merlins in Iowa in 2016. The nesting attempts were in Iowa City and Waterloo and both were successful. Below, we provide documentation for each nesting attempt, discuss previous nesting evidence for this species in Iowa, and suggest that the Merlin may soon become a regular breeder in ornamental conifers.

In early April 2016 Don McRoberts, a local Iowa City schoolteacher, notified birders that a pair of Merlin was nesting at the top of a large Norway spruce near his yard in Iowa City, Johnson County. Caswell followed up on this report on 12 April. When he arrived a male Merlin gave an alarm call, flew overhead, and perched nearby. Caswell quickly spotted the nesting tree and noticed a large stick nest about the size of a small circular laundry basket located ten feet below the apex of the tree. He could barely see what looked like down feathering at the edge of the nest. Eventually the female Merlin appeared and flew to the nest. During his brief observation the Merlins spent about 10 minutes chasing off a pair of American Crows. The Merlins had apparently commandeered the nest from the crows several days prior, but the crows had not yet relinquished rights to their nest. Shortly



*Figure 1. Merlin, Waterloo, Black Hawk, July 2016. Photograph by Bill Scheurman, Waterloo, IA.*



after the crow confrontation, the male Merlin chased off a Broad-winged Hawk, which was circling the area. The nest and territorial behavior strongly suggested that the Merlins were nesting at this site. On 18 June Caswell observed five large chicks in the nest and on 8 July found one lingering fledgling with both adults still present. Many local birders visited the nest site and confirmed that all five young apparently fledged successfully.

Amazingly, a second nesting attempt by Merlins in Iowa in 2016 was documented in Waterloo, Black Hawk County. After hearing a media report of the nesting Iowa City Merlins, a Prairie Rapids Audubon Society member, Linda Johnson, reported the possibility of Merlins nesting in her residential neighborhood in Waterloo. Merlins had been seen hunting from perches atop tall spruce and locust trees for several weeks in April and early May. During a follow-up visit in mid-May, Schilke observed a pair of Merlins near an old American Crow nest in a tall white pine. The location was the backyard of a residence just two houses away from busy Ridgeway Avenue. A visit with the home's owner confirmed the probability of a nesting attempt. He had been seeing the birds for weeks, watched them mate, and regularly saw them visit the nest in his back yard. He graciously granted permission, as did other neighbors, to observe the nest from their yards. Over the span of the next two months Schilke and other local birders followed the progress of the nest. The adults were undisturbed by their presence, but were quick to harass Turkey Vultures or any other raptor that invaded their air space. Oddly enough, a pair of Blue Jays successfully

fledged young from a tree almost directly below the Merlin nest! In mid-June, food was being brought to the nest by the adults. In early July the first downy heads of the chicks were visible. Three young successfully fledged and left the tree completely just a few days before the limb supporting the nest blew down in a storm on 16 July.

These nesting attempts represent the first confirmed nesting by Merlin in Iowa since 1908, and only the second and third nesting attempts overall. The previous nesting record was documented by George Berry east of Marion, Linn County, in 1908 (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). The timing of both of the 2016 nesting attempts was similar, with the Iowa City nest perhaps a week earlier. Incubation lasts about 30 days in the Merlin and young fledge about 29 days after hatching (Warkentin et al.



Figure 2. Merlin, Iowa City, Johnson, 18 June 2016. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.



Figure 3. Merlin pair bringing food to nest, Waterloo, Black Hawk, 6 July 2016. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.

2005). However, the young remain near the nest and are fed by the adults for another 1-4 weeks after fledging (Warkentin et al. 2005). On the basis of this information nesting activity was probably underway by late March at both sites and eggs were probably laid by mid-April. That puts the hatch date sometime in mid-May and the fledging date in about mid-June. Observations of large young in and near each nest through early to mid-July reflect young birds lingering at the nest after fledging. A typical clutch size is 4 eggs (range 1-8) with generally high (>80%) overall nest success (Warkentin et al. 2005). Merlins also prefer to usurp old crow nests as a favored nesting site (Warkentin et al. 2005). Thus, the 2016 Iowa nesting attempts were typical of what can be expected in other regions where Merlins nest. We speculate that the Merlin may eventually become a regular nesting bird in Iowa on the basis of these nesting attempts and known southward breeding range expansions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Birders should carefully watch any Merlin seen in Iowa after early April, especially those in urban areas near ornamental conifers, for evidence of nesting activity.

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# Field Reports—Summer 2016

*James J. Dinsmore*



*James J. Dinsmore*

Summer 2016 featured a fairly hot June and a wet July, but otherwise nothing that would make it stand out as unusual in the weather department. No new species or nesting species for Iowa were added this summer. Probably the biggest news was two Merlin nests, Iowa's first since 1908. This species has been expanding its range, and nesting in Iowa was long expected. Iowa's first nesting records of Ring-necked Duck since 1985 and Winter Wren since 1988 were also good finds.

## WEATHER

June was hot and relatively dry. Temperatures averaged 73.2 degrees, 3.5 degrees above normal, the 14th warmest June in 144 years of records, and the warmest June since 1991. This was especially evident during mid-June when above-average temperatures were recorded throughout Iowa every day from 9–20 June. The highest tem-

perature was 100 degrees on 11 June at Little Sioux, the first three-digit temperature recorded in Iowa since September 2013. The run of 1,004 days without a triple-digit temperature was the second longest in Iowa history, the longest being 1,438 days from August 1991 to July 1995. The lowest temperature was 43 degrees in Belle Plaine, Elkader, and Grinnell on 8 June.

Rainfall in June averaged 3.69 inches, 1.33 inches below average and the 45th driest June on record. In general, northeastern Iowa was the wettest area of the state with rainfall totals twice the normal for the month. Cedar Falls was the wettest station with 11.22 inches of rain. By the end of June, much of south-central and southeastern Iowa was described as having moderate drought conditions and much of west-central, central, and southwestern Iowa was considered to be abnormally dry. There was little in the way of severe weather events. High winds passed through central and northern Iowa on the 14th, and high winds and hail on the 17<sup>th</sup> caused considerable damage in northwestern Iowa.

July temperatures averaged 73.0 degrees, 0.6 degrees below normal and the 50th coolest July on record. The first few days of July were cool with lows of 47 degrees at Cresco, Elkader, and Estherville the lowest of the month. Hotter-than-normal temperatures prevailed from 17–27 July with highs of 97 at Sioux. City on the 20th and at Sioux City, Lamoni, and Des Moines on the 21st. High temperatures combined with high humidity led to heat indices in excess of 110 daily from 20–23 July.

July rainfall averaged 6.13 inches, 1.63 inches above normal. It was the 16th wettest July in 144 years of records and the wettest July since 2010. The dry spell in late June continued into early July but rainfall increased greatly from 6–20 July with an average of 4.86 inches of rain, about double the average for that period. Rainfall totals were greatest in the southwestern quarter of the state and along the Minnesota border from Estherville eastward. Rainfall in the far northwest was about half of normal. The total rainfall for July ranged from 1.64 inches in Orange City to 12.37 in Red Oak. The latter was the second highest July total in 105 years of records. Severe thunderstorms were reported on 11 dates with one on the morning of 17 July the most widespread. On that date, a strong derecho brought high winds on a path across the entire state from Lyon County to Scott County.

## BIRDS OF SUMMER

### **Habitat Conditions**

Little has changed in habitat conditions since last year. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land covers about 1.7 million acres, similar to 2015 but down considerably from its peak in the 1990s. After some years of increases in forest land in Iowa, a slight decline has been detected in the past few years. With so little good forest cover in the state, almost any decline of such habitat is a concern.

Since last summer, two new Bird Conservation Areas have been dedicated. The most recent was the Loess Hills BCA, dedicated in June. Located in Monona and Harrison counties, the area encompasses some of the best examples of the loess hills landform in Iowa. It includes the Loess Hills Wildlife Area, Loess Hills State Forest, and Preparation Canyon State Park and covers some 94,000 acres, 19,000 of which are permanently protected. Much of the area is covered by woodlands, grasslands, or oak savannas and provides good habitat for species such as Red-headed Woodpecker, Bobolink, Orchard Oriole, and Grasshopper Sparrow. The other new BCA is the Lake Sugema/Lacey-Keosauqua BCA, which was dedicated in October 2015. Located in southeastern Iowa, it covers about 51,500 acres and includes Lake Sugema, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, and adjacent areas. Much of the BCA is covered by grasslands or woodlands and provides good habitat for Northern Bobwhite, Henslow's Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark and other grassland species.

### **Breeding Species**

Easily the most interesting were two reports of Merlin nests. Other interesting nesting species were Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Wilson's Phalarope, and Winter Wren. Spotted Towhees were found in the park where they nested in 2015 but no evidence of nesting was mentioned. I received more reports of Black-billed Cuckoo and Veery than in recent years, a welcome change.

Among other species, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, and Great Egret all had good years at the Clinton spoil islands. Ospreys nested at three new sites in central Iowa, and Peregrine Falcons also had a good year. Sandhill Cranes continued to do well, and Barn Owls had a very productive nesting season. Although Least Terns had a good year at the MidAmerican Energy plant near Council Bluffs, changes there will eventually eliminate nesting habitat at Iowa's most reliable Piping Plover and Least Tern nesting site.

## Range Changes

Several species continued range expansions in Iowa. Blue Grosbeaks continued to be found east of their historic western Iowa range with numerous reports in central Iowa and several in north-central Iowa close to the Minnesota border. In eastern Iowa, Blue Grosbeaks continued to be found in the Iowa City area and also in several nearby counties. Sandhill Cranes continued to expand their range westward across Iowa. Three other species, Northern Bobwhite, Northern Mockingbird, and Summer Tanager, seemed to have moved somewhat north with more reports than usual north of their regular southern Iowa range.

## Migrants

As is usual, spring migration extended into June for a few species. These included several shorebirds, Black Tern, Olive-sided, Yellow-bellied, and Alder flycatchers, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, Bay-breasted and Magnolia warblers, and White-throated Sparrow. Southbound migration began in mid-June with the arrival of several species of shorebirds which were soon followed by Black and Forster's terns, Ring-billed Gulls, American White Pelicans, and Double-crested Cormorants. The only early passerines reported were a Black-and-white and two Nashville warblers. Two species that fall more into the nomadic category, Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin, lingered into June. With at least 16 reports of Caspian Tern from early June through late July, one wonders how those sort out as late spring migrants, early fall migrants, or non-breeders.

Shorebirds, most of which are migrants, made a good showing this summer with 31 species including two Casual species. This matched the total for 2012 and was above the yearly average of 28 species for the past five years. Notable misses this summer were Black-necked Stilt (found the previous three years) and Ruddy Turnstone (found five of the past 10 years). Southbound migration seemed to start early this year with seven species (Hudsonian Godwit, Ruff, Sanderling, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willet, and Red-necked Phalarope) found on record-early or near-record-early dates this summer. Big influxes of shorebirds were noted at Saylorville Reservoir on 6 July, Hawkeye Wildlife Area on 10–11 July and 18–19 July, and in Worth and Winnebago counties on 30 July.

## Unusual Species

This was a fairly poor summer for unusual birds. No Accidental species were reported and only three Casual species (King Rail, Snowy Plover, and Ruff) were found. Other unusual species found this summer were Ross's Goose, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Little Blue Heron, Swainson's Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Merlin, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Red Crossbill, Northern Waterthrush, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Spotted Towhee.

### SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **BBS**

= breeding bird survey, **Croton** = Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest (ditto Donnellson, Farmington, and Lick Creek units), **F** = forest, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many ob-

servers, **NM** = national monument, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **Pre** = preserve, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **Sl** = slough, **SF** = state forest, **SP** = state park, **S Pre** = state preserve, **Upper Miss NWR** = Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases. For Sandhill Crane, the N indicates that nesting occurred in 2016.

**Snow Goose:** All: 3 on 1 Jun at Rapp P Page (POR), 4 on 3 Jun at Cone M Louisa (JF), 3 on 16 Jun at Otter Creek M Tama (JF), 2 on 20 Jul at West Branch Cedar (SJD), one 21, 22 Jul at Red Rock Res Marion (eBird), and one 31 Jul at L Macbride Johnson (eBird).

**Ross's Goose:** One 23 Jun near Ventura M Cerro Gordo (RG) had been present since spring. This species has been found six of the last 10 summers.

**Mute Swan:** All: one 9 Jun at L&D 14 Scott (eBird) and one subadult 11, 17 Jun at Bob Pyle M Story (SJD).

**Gadwall:** All: 12 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (eBird), one 8 Jun at Pintail Wetlands Hardin (MP), one 13 Jun in Emmet (DAK), 10 on 26 Jun at Pool Sl Allamakee (eBird), 2 on 11 Jul at Black Hawk SP Black Hawk (eBird), and one 29 Jul in Sac (DAK).

**American Wigeon:** All: 2 on 1 Jun in Plymouth (SJD), 2 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), and one 18 Jul at Ventura M Cerro Gordo (RAV-ph).

**Blue-winged Teal:** A brood 8 Jul at Anderson L Hamilton (SJD) was at the south edge of its Iowa nesting range.

**Northern Shoveler:** Broods were 19

Jun at Eagle Flats WA Hancock (SJD), 8 Jul at Anderson L Hamilton (SJD), 13 Jul nw of Spencer Clay (LAS), 18 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (DAK), and 29 Jul at Kiowa M Sac (DAK); the Hamilton record was at the southern edge of its Iowa nesting range. Other records include one or 2 from 1 Jun–8 Jul at Terry Trueblood RA Johnson (MHB, BCC) and 3 on 4 Jun at Jensen M Madison (AB).

**Northern Pintail:** Broods were found 19 Jun at Mud L Clay (eBird) and 24 Jun at Eagle Flats WA Hancock (SJD), the first reports of nesting since 2013 and for the fourth year in the last ten years. Other reports were a pair 9, 10 Jun at Blue L Monona (SJD) and a male 2 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS).

**Green-winged Teal:** All: 3 on 10 Jun at Deere Dike Dubuque (eBird), one 16 Jun at Otter Creek M Tama (JF), one 26 Jun, 9 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (JDJ), 2 on 7 Jul at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), and one 9 Jul at Tomahawk M Sac (eBird).

**Canvasback:** All: one female 7 Jun, 2 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), 2 females 10 Jun at Blue L Monona (SJD), and 6 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 Lee (SJD).

**Redhead:** All: 5–7 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M Story (AB, MP), 39 on 7 Jun at Mud L Clay and a brood there 29 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 32 on 18 Jun on Trumbull L Clay and 2 broods there 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 10 on 22 Jun at Union Hills WA Cerro Gordo (CJF), one male 23 Jun at Ringneck WA Grundy (DGE), and 2 on 29 Jun at Waubonsie Access Fremont (MP).

**Ring-necked Duck:** All: 3 on 5 Jun at Grovers L Dickinson (LAS), 2 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M Story (AB), 2 on 18 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (LAS) and a female with 7 yg there 2 Jul (LAS, JDJ), which seems to be the first report of nesting in Iowa since 1985. Other reports were 2 males 8 Jun at



Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (LGR), one 2 Jul at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), and one 13, 24 Jul at Ringneck WA *Grundy* (DGE).

**Lesser Scaup:** One or 2 were found in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Story*, and *Tama* (m.ob.). The most was 9 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

**Hooded Merganser:** Broods were noted in *Cerro Gordo*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Palo Alto*, *Polk*, *Tama*, and *Winneshiek* (m.ob.) with five broods 3 Jul at Chichaqua Bottoms *Polk* (BE) the most.

**Ruddy Duck:** Trumbull L *Clay* was the center of Ruddy Duck activity with 246 there 7 Jun (LAS, JDJ) and a brood on 9 Jul (LAS). The next largest group was 27 including a brood on 30 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (PH). Elsewhere, up to 8 were in *Hamilton*, *Hardin*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Pocahontas*, *Story*, *Warren*, and *Worth* (m.ob.).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Several observers noted that quail were more widespread and numerous than in recent years. Reports came from 31 counties, mostly in the southern half of Iowa but north to *Woodbury* (m.ob., eBird). Totals on several BBS routes in early June were the highest they have been in recent years: e.g., 40 in *Appanoose* and *Davis* (TNJ), 53 in *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS), 30 in *Monroe*, *Lucas*, and *Appanoose* (TNJ), and 3 in *Boone* (JB).

**Gray Partridge:** Reports from *Dickinson*, *Hamilton*, *Howard*, *Kossuth*, *Sioux*, *Winnebago*, and *Worth* (m.ob.) were all in its expected north-central Iowa range. Two on 1, 8 Jul in *Polk* (AB, RLC) were south of where it is usually found as was a brood 27 Jul at Big Creek SP *Polk* (SJD). Two on 26 Jun in *Clayton* (PDBS) were east of its normal range.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** The 35 found 3 Jun on a BBS route in *Appanoose* and *Davis* (TNJ), was a good count for southern Iowa.

**Ruffed Grouse:** Four on 18 Jun in *Clayton* (eBird) and one 30 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (RG) were rare summer reports.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Forty birds from Nebraska were released near Kellerton *Ringgold* earlier this year. Almost 2000 acres of good prairie-chicken habitat are now protected in the Kellerton WA, and prairie-chickens seem to be doing well (Stephanie Shepherd, IDNR).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** High counts at Trumbull L *Clay* were 15 broods 26 Jun (LAS) and 190 birds 9 Jul (eBird). Birds were found in 25 counties, mostly in the northern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird). One 23 Jun at Ringneck WA *Grundy* (DGE) and 2 on 1 Jul at Jensen M *Madison* (SB) were away from traditional summer sites.

**Red-necked Grebe:** Nesting was noted at two sites: at Trumbull L *Clay*, 8 ads on 1 Jun, 3 ads with 2 yg 7 Jun, 11 ads and 5 yg on 26 Jun, and 7 ads and 3 yg on 2 Jul (LAS) and at Big Wall L *Wright*, a nest on 5 Jun and 2 yg seen there later (RAV). Two ads were at Silver L *Worth* on 4 Jun (DP) and one was there 20 Jun (CJF). This species has nested in Iowa five of the last 10 years.

**Eared Grebe:** Most reports were from Trumbull L *Clay* with 19 on 1 Jun (LAS), 11 there 7 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 9 ads including a pair at a nest with 3 eggs 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 5 nests and 17 ads on 2 Jul (LAS, JDJ), and 2 ads on nest platforms 5 Jul (BCC) but no active nest 9 Jul (LAS). Other reports were 2 pairs 5 Jun at Grovers L *Dickinson* (LAS) and ca 10 nests and later several yg at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (RAV-ph). These were the first nesting records in more than 10 years.

**Western Grebe:** Most reports were from Trumbull L *Clay* with 2 on 1 Jun (LAS), 2 ads with 2 yg and 3 other ads on



18 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 6 ads and 6 yg (2 broods) on 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), and 11 ads and 10 yg 13 Jul (LAS, JDJ). Other reports were 2 on 7 Jun at Elk L *Clay* (LAS, JDJ) and one 8 Jun at South Twin L *Calhoun* (RAV).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports from far northeastern Iowa where the species seems to be least common were 4 on 12 Jun in *Allamakee* (PDBS) and 5 on 7 Jul in *Ridgeway Winneshiek* (AB).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** It was a good year with reports from 50 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Nearly all reports were of one or 2 birds; the 24 on 1 Jun on Huron Island *Des Moines* (KJM) probably included migrants.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** With reports from 24 counties from throughout Iowa it was reported more frequently than in recent years. All reports were of one or 2 individuals (m.ob., eBird).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** All: 3 on 4 Jun at Stephens SF, Lucas Unit *Lucas* (DTh), 5 on 7 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (RIA, PHA), one 17 Jun at Ross P *Fremont* (KVS), and 2 on 19 Jul near Stephens SF *Lucas* (SJD).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** All: 8 on 4 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast and Lucas units *Lucas* (DTh), 2 on 5 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (GLV), one 17 Jun at Ross P *Fremont* (KVS), one 21 Jun near Sparks Cemetery *Boone* (LGD), 3 on 26 Jun in *Appanoose* (AB), and singles in *Johnson*, *Decatur*, and two sites in *Monona* (eBird). Most: 13 on 18 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (eBird).

**Chimney Swift:** A pair again nested in the historic Sherman swift tower in Bickett-Rate Pre *Cedar* (Linda and Robert Scarth).

**KING RAIL:** All: one 1, 2 Jun near Frazer's Bend *Fremont* (POR, eBird) (a carryover from late May, Harms 2016), one calling 2, 17, 18 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo*

*Alto* (LAS, \*JN, DAK), one 24 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (\*DTh), and one 24 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (\*SJD).

**Virginia Rail:** All: one 2 Jun near Hamburg *Fremont* (eBird), up to 4 calling on 2, 5 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS, BCC), 6 on 3 Jul at Silver L *Worth* (POR), one 18 Jul at Trumbull L *Palo Alto* (DAK), 3 on 23 Jul at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (BCC), and 8 on 25 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (eBird).

**Sora:** One observer heard Soras, mostly one or 2, at 11 sites in *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Emmet*, *Palo Alto*, *Pocahontas*, and *Winnebago*; the most was 7 on 19 Jun at Jemmerston Sl *Dickinson* (RAV). Others were singles in *Emmet* (DAK), at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS), near Ruthven *Palo Alto* (BCC), and at Pool Sl *Allamakee* (eBird).

**Common Gallinule:** Up to 6 were found 20 Jun–29 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, RIA, PHA, BCC). Others were one 30 Jun at Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas* (eBird), 2 on 16 Jul at Banner Flats WA *Warren* (AMJ), 8 on 16, 29 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KJM, SBH), one 22 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DCH), and one or 2 in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Pocahontas*, and *Winnebago* including a brood 27 Jul in *Winnebago* (RAV).

**American Coot:** As many as 370 coots were at Trumbull L *Clay* 7 Jun (eBird).

**Sandhill Crane:** Nesting was reported in 11 counties. Along the edges of its nesting range, 2 ads were seen with a colt 24 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS), 2 ads with a colt 8 Jul at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD), a pair with 2 colts 17 May at Bob Pyle M *Story* (Nancy Johnson *vide* SJD), and an ad with a colt in early July at Riverton WA *Fremont* (Matt Dollison *vide* SJD). Elsewhere adults with one or 2 colts were found at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE), near Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), near Dubuque (eBird), Iowa River Corridor *Iowa* (JF), Cone M

*Louisa* (JF), Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), and near Northwood *Worth* (CJF). The record of nesting in Story County increases the number of counties with nesting records to 31. The largest post-breeding group was 11 on 23 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (HZ).

**American Avocet:** Most reports were from Hawkeye WA *Johnson* starting with one 19 Jun (JF), 2 from 6–13 Jul (JF, BCC), 17 on 18 Jul (JF), and 7 on 22 Jul (JF). Others were one 3 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ), 2 on 9, 10 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (eBird), 3 on 16 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 2 on 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAK).

**Black-bellied Plover:** All: 2 on 6, 9 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird) and one 8 Jun at Maskunkya M *Mahaska* (Bill Ohde).

**American Golden-Plover:** Last: 3 on 3 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). First: 2 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 4 on 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** One 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JLF, JF) was first found in late May (Harms 2016) and is Iowa's second summer record.

**Semipalmated Plover:** Last: singles 1 Jun in *Clay* (LAS) and 7 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF). One 26 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ) was either very early or summering. Next earliest was one 13 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC). Most: 6 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Piping Plover:** All: one 20 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Killdeer:** Post-breeding counts included 1926 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 230 on 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 650 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Numerous reports from 25 counties, mostly of one or 2 birds and from the northwestern half of Iowa. High counts were 17 on 22 Jul and 20 on 26 Jul at sod farms in *Dallas* and *Linn* (RIA,

PHA, JF), a favored habitat for pre-migratory groups.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** All: one 9, 10 Jun at Blue L *Monona* (SJD) ties the record latest date and 4 on 6 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) were record early.

**Marbled Godwit:** All: one 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 2 on 18 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and 15 there 19 Jul (JF).

**RUFF:** All: a Reeve on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD) was Iowa's fourth summer record and record earliest.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One 1 Jun in *Plymouth* (SJD) and an injured bird 1 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB) were the last spring birds. First: 7 nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 4 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), all on 13 Jul. Most: 80 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Sanderling:** All: singles 1 Jun at Akron *Plymouth* (SJD), 4 Jun near Hawarden *Plymouth* (JDJ), 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, record earliest), 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAK), 3 on 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 2 on 24 Jul at Hawk Valley WA *Clay* (LAS).

**Dunlin:** All: one 1 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 3 on 2 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird), one 3 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (eBird), 12 on 7 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), and one 8 Jun at Maskunkya M *Mahaska* (Bill Ohde).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: one 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (eBird).

**Least Sandpiper:** Last: 70 on 1 Jun on sheetwater in *Clay* (LAS). First: 5 on 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and 10 on 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). Most: 237 on 10 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 650 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Last: 2 on

22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF). Most: 122 on 4 Jun w of Spencer *Clay* (LAS).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All: one 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk, ties second-earliest), 5 on 24 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ), and 3 on 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAk).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Last: one 6 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (BCC). One 16, 22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (BSc, JF) may have been summering. First southbound: 6 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS) were the start of a strong migration including 121 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), 400 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), 2000 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH), and 250 on 30 Jul in *Winnebago* (PH).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Northbound migrants dwindled from 81 on 1 Jun in *Clay* (LAS) and 32 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M *Marshall* (MP) to 2 on 12 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (BCC). First: 3 on 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and one 5 Jul in *Clay* (BCC). Most: 70 on 24 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (eBird).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: 4 ads 12 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and one or 2 there 13–17 Jul (JF, BCC-details), one 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk-details), and one or 2 on 13, 24, 29 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ-details). This migrant has been found in four of the last five summers.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: one 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC, second earliest), one 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), and 2 on 2 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 12 on 6 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Wilson's Snipe:** All: one 25 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (eBird), 2 on 26 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), one 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), one 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAk), one 30 Jul in a flooded field in *Worth* (PH), and one 31 Jul at Aldo Leopold WA *Bremer* (eBird).

**American Woodcock:** More reports than most summers: 2 on 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Benton* (JF), one 28 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (JDJ), 2 on 30 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (PDBS), one 1 Jul in *Lucas* (BCC), and one 23 Jul at Gitche Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAk).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Nesting reports were an ad with 3 yg 27 Jun at Tingley *Ringgold* (fide Jeffrey Livingston) and 2 ads and 2 fledglings 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and 3 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ). Most: 7 on 7 Jul in *Black Hawk* (eBird) and 7 on 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Last: one 1 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). Singles 27 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB, AB) and Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) were the first southbound birds and 13 on 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk) were the most.

**Willet:** Southbound birds were one 20 Jun at Virgin L *Palo Alto* (RAV, third earliest), 6 on 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 7 on 6 Jul, 5 on 12 Jul, and one 14 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and one 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ)

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Last: one 1 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 2 on 9 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird). One 22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) was injured but one there 27 Jun (JF) and 5 on 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) were southbound. The 45 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS) was the first migrant flock reported. Numerous flocks were reported in July with 1200 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH) the most.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** More reports than usual: 9 on 1 Jun in *Plymouth* (SJD), 2 on 3 Jun near Ames *Story* (HZ), 6 on 9, 10 Jun near Blue L *Monona* (SJD) were courting, one female 18 Jun and 2 males and a

juv 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JJU), one ad and one juv 19 Jun at Dairy ponds *Woodbury* (eBird), 2 males 20 Jun at Plover WPA *Pocahontas* acted like they were near a nest or brood (Erich Gilbert *fide* SJD), and one 13–17 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, JF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: a female 9, 14 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, DAK) was record earliest.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** All: a juv 21, 22 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, JF) and an ad (basic) and a juv 27, 30 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF, SJD) were Iowa's seventh and eighth summer records in the past 10 years, all but one in the last half of July.

**Franklin's Gull:** Late northbound flocks were 14 on 5 Jun near Percival *Fremont* (eBird) and 19 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ). One or 2 were found 10 Jun–1 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, JB, RLC), and Hendrickson M *Story* (HZ). Early flocks were 240 on 5 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (eBird) and 85–89 on 5, 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (BCC, LAS).

**Ring-billed Gull:** As usual, a few were scattered across Iowa in June and early July. Numerous reports in the Great Lakes region such as 57 on 12 Jul in *Dickinson* (DAK) and 100 on 30 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (eBird) may have included birds from nearby colonies as well as migrants. The 65 on 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and 60 on 30 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird) probably were southbound.

**Least Tern:** The nesting colony at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* was active with 6 nests and 11 eggs 2 Jun (POR), 24 ads and 5 nests 10 Jun (SJD), 7 nests 28 Jun (JDJ), and 4 birds 11 Jul (BSc, LGR). Elsewhere singles were at Blue L *Monona* 10 Jun (SJD), Saylorville Res *Polk* 27 Jun, 6, 31 Jul (JB, AB, SJD), and 7 Jul at Co-

peland Bend WA *Fremont* (Ryan Ubias *fide* SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** More reports than usual: one 3 Jun, 3 on 17, 20 Jun, and 2 on 12 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), one 11 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 27 Jun, 4 Jul and 5 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, RLC), 2 on 28 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (MP), 7 on 30 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF) and one there 16 Jul (SJD), 2 on 4 Jul and one 28 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO, AB), one 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD), 6 on 24 Jul at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (AB), one 25 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE), and 5 on 26 Jul at Harper Sl *Allamakee* (eBird).

**Black Tern:** Late northbound stragglers included singles 2 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB) and 7 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BCC), likely the 17 on 1 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), and numerous birds 7 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS). The 63 on 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (JDJ) and singles 10 Jul at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* (DGE), 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 3 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD) were clearly southbound.

**Common Tern:** All: singles 5 Jun near Little Swan L *Dickinson* (LAS), 5 Jun at Hendrickson M *Story* (MP), 20 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), and 24 Jul at McIntosh Woods SP *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Forster's Tern:** Birds were present throughout the period at Trumbull L *Clay* with a pair there 7 Jun (LAS) and 7 ads and 3 fledglings being fed by ads 9 Jul (LAS). A pair was seen building a nest platform 7 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS). Southbound birds included 9 on 14 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 18 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Common Loon:** All: 2 on 1, 3, 21 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF, eBird) and one there 7 Jun, 15 Jul (BCC), and 4 (basic) on 18 Jun on Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS, JDJ).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 704 ads, 644 nests, and 1218 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *vide* SJD) and the colony at High L *Emmet* had 100 birds 1 Jun (eBird). Many other reports with 50 on 4 Jun in *Scott* (eBird) and 34 on 9 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (eBird) the most.

**American White Pelican:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 941 ads, 503 nests, and 1170 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *vide* SJD). The usual midsummer flocks included 20 on 11 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC) and 60 on 13 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh). Flocks of 2000 on 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE) and 350 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC) indicated fall migration was underway.

**American Bittern:** All: singles 4 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ), 20 Jun at Northern Prairie WA *Worth* (CJF), 21 Jun at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RG), 30 Jul at Rice Lake SP *Worth* (PH), and one several times 20 Jun–24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Least Bittern:** Birds were found throughout the summer at Trumbull L *Clay* with 11 on 9 Jul (JDJ) the most. One was at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* 18 Jul (BVL, RG).

**Great Egret:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 80 ads, 108 nests, and 236 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *vide* SJD), much lower totals than in 2015. High counts were 25 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR), 75 on 16 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird), 69 on 23 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (eBird), and 59 on 29 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KJM, SBH).

**Little Blue Heron:** All: 3 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR).

**Cattle Egret:** All: one 2 Jun at Lake Darling SP *Washington* (eBird), 56 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR), one 10 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (SJD), and one 11 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (eBird).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one 2 Jun at Elk L *Clay* (RAV), one 9 Jun near L&D 14 *Scott* (eBird), one 6 Jul near Sheffield *Franklin* (BEh), 6 on 13 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (RAV), and one 21 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: 2 on 18 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ), 2 there on 23 Jun (RIA, PHA), 2 ads there 26 Jun (AB), and one ad 19 Jul (SJD). Elsewhere an ad was at the South Skunk River WA *Jasper* 18 Jun (SJD) and a juv was at Aldo Leopold WA *Bremer* 30 Jul (BCC).

**Plegadis** sp.: All: a dark ibis 1 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and 7 on 7 Jun at Frazier's Bend *Fremont* (eBird) were seen briefly and probably were White-faced Ibis.

**Osprey:** This year 22 of 24 active nests were successful and produced 41 young. New nests were two in *Polk* and one each in *Jasper* and *Dickinson*. *Polk* had seven active nests and *Dickinson* had three. Since 2003, 241 young Osprey have been produced in 135 successful nests (PSc). Five young Ospreys from Minnesota were released in late July at Clear Lake and in *Carroll*.

**Mississippi Kite:** Reports from West Des Moines *Polk* were 2 on 6 Jun (DTh, RIA, PHA), one 10 Jun (DAK), and 3 on 28 Jun (AB). Reports in Ottumwa *Wapello* were singles 7, 23 Jun, 1 Jul (BSc, LGR, MP, BCC) and 2 on 18 Jun (TNJ).

**Northern Harrier:** All: singles 13 Jun in *Emmet* (DAK), 2 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 24 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), and 26 Jul north of Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RG).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Evidence of nesting included a pair 21 Jun west of *Carroll* (DCH) and a nest with 2 yg 1 Jul in *Urbandale Polk* (BE).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Reports included one 5 Jun at Kettleston *Hogsback* WA *Dickinson* (LAS), 2 on 18 Jun at *Donnellson*



Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 18 Jun–17 Jul at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ, RHA, PHA, AB, BCC) and 2 ads and one yg there 19 Jul (SJD), one 24 Jun Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), one 24 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (MP), 2 juv 19 Jul at Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE), and 2 on 21 Jul at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (eBird).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Reports included singles 2 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ), 3 Jun at Yellow Banks P *Polk* (AB), 4 Jun and 29 Jul (a juv) at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, DTh), 5 Jun at Christopherson Sl *Dickinson* (LAS), 2 on 5 Jun over Sioux City *Woodbury* (POR), 18, 24 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, MP), 23 Jun at Ottumwa *Wapello* (MP), 24 Jul at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 24 Jul at Margo Frankel Woods *Polk* (AB).

**Swainson's Hawk:** All: singles 4 Jun near Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 12 Jun near Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), and 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk). Although this species has been found in six of the last seven summers, there are no recent reports of nesting.

**Barn Owl:** Birds were found in 23 counties, the most ever. Nesting attempts were reported from 16 sites in 13 counties, mostly in southern Iowa but north to *Franklin* and *Sioux*. At least 29 young fledged, the most in recent years (BEh).

**Short-eared Owl:** One seen 8 Jun, in late June, and 20 Jul at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (fide KVS) was the first summer report since 2012 and the third summer report in the last 10 years.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Many were reported from throughout Iowa but none from *Lyon*, *O'Brien*, or *Osceola* in the northwestern corner of the state (eBird).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** As usual most reports were from the northern third of Iowa: a pair at nest with 2 yg at Waterman Creek Valley *O'Brien* (LAS), singles in

*Cherokee* (DBi), Oak Grove P *Sioux* (MP), Trumbull L *Clay* (DAk), 2 in *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 3 at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (RG), and 8 at Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* (DK). Further south along the Mississippi R, one or 2 were found at Green Island WA, Pleasant Creek, and as many as 10 including 3 juv in Upper Miss NWR, all in *Jackson* (KJM).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Up to 4 were found in 31 counties mainly in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob.). Outliers were singles 1 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (SJD), 2 Jun at Fort Defiance SP *Emmet* (eBird), and 29 Jul at Wanata SP *Clay* (LAS).

**Merlin:** A historic year with Iowa's first nests since 1908. Two downy yg were seen 18 Jun at a nest in Iowa City *Johnson* (BCC) and 5 yg were seen out of the nest 30 Jun (Jean Allgood-ph). At a nest found in late May in Waterloo *Black Hawk* (TSS), both ads were seen taking food to yg on 19 Jun (DGE) and 3 yg had fledged by 12 Jul (TSS). See article in this issue.

**Peregrine Falcon:** This year, 14 of 18 nests were successful and produced 36 yg. The totals for 2015 were 14 nests and 35 yg (PSc).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Singles 2 Jun in Lake City *Calhoun* (eBird) and 16 Jun on Comet Trail *Grundy* (MP-details, ties record latest) were the only reports.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Last: 2 on 4 Jun at Amana Woods *Iowa* (JF), one 5 Jun at Woodman Hollow S Pre *Webster* (MCK), and one 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAk-details, record latest).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Up to 5 were found in 24 counties mainly in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird) with an outlier 9 Jul at Auburn *Sac* (eBird). The most was 15 on 28 Jul at Palisade-Kepler SP *Linn* (BCC).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Last: one 8 Jun near Perry *Dallas* (JB), one singing 13 Jun at



*Eared Grebe nest, Pickerel L, Buena Vista, 21 June 2016. Photograph by Rachel A. Vanausdall, Ames, IA.*



*Willetts, Saylorville Res, Polk, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Stilt Sandpiper, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 16 July 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Great Crested Flycatcher, Port Louisa NWR, Louisa, 9 June 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*White-eyed Vireo, Saylorville Res, Polk, 27 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*





*Tree Swallows, Polk, 27 June 2016. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.*



*Sedge Wren, Boone, 23 July 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Leucistic American Robin, North Liberty, Johnson, 4 July 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Northern Mockingbird, Jester P, Polk, 14 June 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Nashville Warbler, Big Creek SP, Polk, 27 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Yellow Warbler*, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*American Redstart*, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*Yellow-breasted Chat*, Lake Sugema WA, Van Buren, 3 June 2016. Photograph by Bill Ohde, Columbus, IA.



*Field Sparrow*, Little Cedar WA, Floyd, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Lark Sparrow, Saylorville Res, Polk, 15 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Grasshopper Sparrow, Boone, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Blue Grosbeak, Waterworks Prairie P, Johnson, 25 July 2016. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.*



*Orchard Oriole, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

Rockford Fossil P *Floyd* (TSS), and one 18 Jun in Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAK).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Reported in 38 counties, mainly in the northern two thirds of the state. There were few reports from the southern third of Iowa and only singles in *Fremont* and *Ringgold* from Missouri-border counties (m.ob., eBird).

**Least Flycatcher:** Late migrants were singles 5 Jun at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* and Hawarden *Sioux* (eBird), and one 6 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). One 18 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK) was likely an early fall migrant. Singles 7 Jun in *Winneshiek* and 17 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (PDBS) were probably nesting, and one 18 Jun at Kettleson Hogsback WA *Dickinson* (LAS) may have been nesting or a late migrant.

**Western Kingbird:** Western Iowa reports were from *Dickinson*, *Fremont*, *Harrison*, *Lyon Plymouth*, *Pottawattamie* and *Woodbury* (m.ob., eBird). East of there, reports were of one 21 Jun near Jefferson *Greene* (DCH), 2 on 27 Jul in *Story* (eBird), and several from their local stronghold in *Polk* (eBird).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Besides a family group of 5 on 21 Jul in *Adair* (DAK) and 5 on 18 Jun on a BBS route in *Page* (KVS), 1–3 were found in *Adair*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dickinson*, *Iowa*, *Keokuk*, *Louisa*, *Madison*, *Marion*, and *Ringgold* (m.ob., eBird).

**White-eyed Vireo:** Other than one 27 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph), all were in southeastern Iowa: one 10 Jun and 2 on 18 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (DTh, CRE), 2 on 18 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* and one there 24 Jun (CRE, SJD, MP), one 18 Jun and 2 on 23 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ, RIA, PHA), one 5 Jul at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird), one 10, 23 Jul in *Scott* (eBird), and one 16 Jul at Kent P *Johnson* (MHB, CRE).

**Bell's Vireo:** Up to 5 in 25 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob.).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Found in more than 40 counties scattered throughout the state (m.ob., eBird).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Most: 87 on 29 Jul at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM, SBH).

**Bank Swallow:** Most: 200 on 8 Jun at a colony in *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** All: one 24 Jun at Macbride Nat Rec A *Johnson* (eBird). Reported in seven of the last 10 summers, this was the first summer report since 2013.

**Brown Creeper:** Singles 8 Jul in Mystic *Appanoose* (TNJ) and 9 Jul at Goranson Access *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) were both in unexpected areas for midsummer. The 5 on 1 Jun on Huron Island *Des Moines* (KJM) and one 16 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (KJM) and singles in *Allamakee*, *Dubuque* and *Scott* (eBird) were in areas where it probably nests, and singles in *Woodbury* and *Pottawattamie* (eBird) suggest other places where nesting may occur. These were the first summer reports since 2013.

**Winter Wren:** An ad with 2 recently fledged yg 19 Jun in Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE) represents Iowa's first documented nesting since 1988.

**Sedge Wren:** Up to 8 were in 35 counties, mostly in the northern two-thirds of the state (m.ob. eBird). The only reports from Missouri-border counties were one 2 Jun in *Fremont* and several from 12–30 Jul in *Ringgold* (eBird). The most was 15 on 29 Jul in *Sac* (DAK).

**Marsh Wren:** Most reports were from northern Iowa, especially from the Prairie Pothole region and along the Mississippi R (m.ob., eBird). The southernmost reports were 2 on 2 Jun near Hamburg *Fremont* and 12 on 7 Jun at Frazier's Bend *Fremont* (eBird).

**Carolina Wren:** Reported from 23 counties, more than usual. Most were in the southern half of Iowa but outliers were singles 29 Jun along the Upper Iowa R *Winneshieck* (eBird) and 3 Jul at Five Ridge Prairie *Plymouth* (eBird).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Uncommon in the northwestern quarter of Iowa, reports from sites such as High L *Emmet*, Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas*, Oak Grove P *Sioux*, and Five Ridge Prairie S Pre *Plymouth* (eBird) indicate scattered populations in that region.

**Veery:** More reports than most years. Besides 2 ads and 1 yg 27 Jun at Brush Creek Canyon S Pre *Fayette* (PDBS), up to 4 were at Amana Woods Iowa (JF), Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* and *Winnebago* (PH, RG), Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE), Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (PDBS), Backbone SP *Delaware* (DGE), Deere Dike *Dubuque* (eBird), Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird), and Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird). One 2 Jun in Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ) was outside its usual Iowa range.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Late migrants were singles 1 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (SJD), 2 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), and 2 on 4 Jun at Grammar Grove P *Marshall* (MP).

**Wood Thrush:** Mostly one or 2 in more than 40 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Most: 5 on 3 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and 5 on 23 Jun at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK)

**Northern Mockingbird:** Up to 5 were found in 11 counties in the southern third of Iowa (DAK, TNJ, JLF, JF, KVS, eBird) where it is rare but regular in summer. Further north, where it is less expected, one or 2 were found in *Audubon*, *Dallas*, *Iowa*, *Johnson*, and *Scott* (DAK, JLF, JF, eBird), and several observers found it at Saylorville Res *Polk* (m.ob.) including 2 ads and a juv there

22 Jul (RIA, PHA). Most surprising was one 30 Jul at Hanlontown Sl *Worth* (PH) near the Minnesota border.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Found statewide: mostly one or 2 birds but occasionally flocks of 10–15 birds (e.g., 15 on 2 Jun at Fort Defiance SP *Emmet*) were found (m.ob., eBird). A flock of 105 birds 1 Jun in Polk City *Polk* (AB) was unusually large for this date.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Reported in 11 counties, all within its established range in eastern Iowa (eBird, m.ob.). One 16 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (LGR, BSc) and one 26 Jul in rural *Monroe* (eBird) were near the edge of its range.

**Red Crossbill:** All: 3 on 3 Jun at Cherokee *Cherokee* (DBi) were the last of continuing birds seen in May (Harms 2016). This was the first summer report for this species since 2013.

**Pine Siskin:** All: 8 from 1–5 Jun in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 4 from 1–12 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 2 on 3 Jun at Cherokee *Cherokee* (DBi), one 8 Jun in *Sac* (EB), and 2 on 18 Jun in Davenport *Scott* (WZ). These was the first summer reports for siskins since 2013.

**Ovenbird:** Most reports were in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird) with outliers at Dorothy Pecaut Nat Center *Woodbury* and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (eBird). Most: 10 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (eBird).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All: one 19 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (SJD).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** All: One or 2 were found in *Appanoose*, *Clayton*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Monroe*, *Muscatine*, and *Van Buren* in eastern Iowa (m.ob., eBird). One 18 Jul in the Glenwood Archaeological S Pre *Mills* (eBird) was the only western Iowa report.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One 3 Jun at

Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) was the third latest record.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** All: 4 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (MP), 3 on 20 Jun at Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (PDBS), and singles at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BCC), Matsell Bridge Natural A *Linn* (MP), Pikes Peak SP *Clayton*, Croton Unit *Lee*, Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas*, and Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (eBird).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** All: one 16 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (KJM). This species has been found in Iowa in eight of the last 10 summers and has nested several times.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Black Hawk*, *Clayton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Louisa*, *Polk*, and *Scott*, all along the Mississippi R or its major tributaries. Reports away from there were singles at Brenton Sl *Dallas* (eBird), Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP), and an ad and 2 yg on 22 Jul at Iowa Lakeside Lab *Dickinson* (NB, eBird). Most: 35 on 1 Jun at Huron Island *Des Moines* and 15 on 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM).

**Nashville Warbler:** All: an ad and a juv on 27 Jul at Big Creek SP *Polk* (SJD-ph) tied the second earliest record.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Muscatine*, *Scott*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird). Most: 7 on 9 Jun in Yellow River F *Allamakee* (DK). One in Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (eBird) was the only report from western Iowa.

**Hooded Warbler:** All: one 10 Jun at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (DTh) and one 18 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE).

**American Redstart:** This common woodland species was reported from more than 40 counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 42 on 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM) and 16 on 16 Jun at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (eBird).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Louisa*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird). Most: up to 10 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (MP, eBird).

**Northern Parula:** Besides 2 ads feeding a nestling 10 Jul at Pammel SP *Madison* (SB), up to 7 were found in *Appanoose*, *Boone*, *Clinton*, *Des Moines*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all in roughly the southeastern quarter of Iowa. Outliers were singles at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ).

**Magnolia Warbler:** One 2 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) was Iowa's first summer report since 2012.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** All: one 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM) was Iowa's third summer record and the second latest.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** All: late migrants were singles 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM), 2 Jun in Marion *Linn* (Jim Durbin-ph), and 8 Jun at Lake Iowa P *Iowa* (Billy Reiter-Marolf). Two singing males 8 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (DK) were suggestive of nesting birds. Similar observations were made at that location yearly from 2007-2011.

**Pine Warbler:** All: a late migrant 2 Jun in Lake City *Calhoun* (Frederick Ruckersfeldt-ph), and singles 18, 24 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, MP), 4 Jul at Cihha Fen Pre *Johnson* (eBird), and 19 Jul at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (SJD).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** From 1–3 in *Allamakee*, *Black Hawk*, *Boone*, *Clayton*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, or *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all along or near the Mississippi R or its major tributaries.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Mostly one or 2 in *Appanoose*, *Benton*, *Black Hawk*, *Dubuque*, *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Tama*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all in the south-



eastern quarter of Iowa. Most: 5 on 26, 30 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Van Buren* (AB, eBird).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 3 males and a female 11 Jun (JDJ), 3 on 18 Jun (DAK), and one or 2 on 28 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (RIA, PHA, MP) where the species nested in 2015. Other reports were one heard 18 Jun along Butcher Rd *Plymouth* (DAK) and 2 heard and one seen 23 Jul at Gitchie-Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK).

**Eastern Towhee:** With reports from more than 40 counties, this species was found statewide (m.ob., eBird). Reports included 6 on 11 Jun and one 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ, DAK), 2 on 18 Jun in *Plymouth* (DAK), and 4 on 23 Jul at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK), all at sites where Spotted Towhees were reported. It would be interesting to have detailed information on towhees from these sites to see if interbreeding is occurring.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** All reports were from the northern two rows of counties with several reports from *Clay*, *Dickinson*, and *Palo Alto* (LAS, JN, POR, eBird) where it seems to be established. Reports west of there were singles 8 Jul near Peterson O'Brien (eBird) and 23 Jul at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK). To the east, reports were of up to 4 on 2 Jun at Union Hills WA *Cerro Gordo* (RG, BVL), 3 on 26 Jun at Little Cedar WA *Floyd* (MHB), and 2 on 7 Jul at Hayden Prairie S Pre *Howard* (AB). Most: 8 on 5 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (eBird) and 23 Jul at Diamond Lake WA *Dickinson* (JN).

**Lark Sparrow:** Birds were found in 27 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Most: 8 on 17 Jun at Sauk Rail Trail *Carroll* (eBird) and 24 Jul at Freda Halfner Kettlehole S Pre *Dickinson* (eBird).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Many reports, mostly of 1–3 birds, from more than 40 counties throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird).

Most: 20 on 8 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Found statewide in 30 counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 15 on 8 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS) and 12 on 25 Jun at Indiangrass Hills *Iowa* (MHB).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Most reports were in the northern third of Iowa with one 13 Jun at Harrier M *Boone* (eBird) the furthest south. Most: 22 on 25 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (eBird).

**White-throated Sparrow:** All: singles on 5 Jun at Schaefer Nat A *Black Hawk* (Connor Langan-details) and 18 Jun at Bever P *Linn* (Billy Reiter-Marolf-details) were late. This is the third straight summer the species has been found in Iowa.

**Summer Tanager:** Most reports were from the southern third of Iowa where it is rare but expected. North of there were reports from *Cedar*, *Clinton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (eBird, KJM, SBH, JLF, RLC, JB) in the central third of the state and further north on 18 Jun at Butcher Rd *Plymouth* (DAK), 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAK), and 29 Jun at Upper Iowa R *Winneshiek* (eBird) in northern Iowa. This species seems to be extending its range northward.

**Blue Grosbeak:** With reports from 26 counties, 2016 was a record summer for this species. Besides the usual reports from the western border counties (m.ob., eBird), and other western Iowa counties (*Carroll*, *Cherokee*, *Dickinson*, *Guthrie*, *Ringgold*), most of which have had a few for some years (DCH, AB, LAS, eBird), other reports came from central Iowa including Saylorville Res (*Polk*) which had at least 5 males (SJD, KVS), *Warren*, and *Jasper* (eBird). Reports from southeastern Iowa came from *Louisa*, *Washington*, and *Van Buren* (eBird, MP) and north to *Johnson* (BCC, MHB, JF) where they have occurred for several years. Re-



ports from Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE, TSS) and *Tama* (eBird) extend its range further north and west. Most surprising were reports from north-central Iowa with birds at three sites in *Cerro Gordo* and single sites in *Floyd*, *Worth*, and *Winnebago* (BVL, RG, PH, CJF, BCC). Several observers noted that the presence of a pond or gravel pit with scattered trees or shrubs were common features at these sites.

**Dickcissel:** With a count of 138 on an 18 Jun BBS route in *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS) and many other double-digit counts, this remains one of Iowa's most abundant summer species. It is widely distributed except in the northeastern corner of the state (m.ob., eBird).

**Bobolink:** Numerous reports, in general decreasing as one moves south, but Bobolinks were found at Grand River Grasslands *Ringgold* and near Cincinnati *Appanoose* (eBird), both near the Missouri border.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports from

far western Iowa included one 30 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (eBird) in northwestern Iowa.

**Western Meadowlark:** The easternmost reports were singles at Cone M *Louisa* and Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Still common in its stronghold in Iowa's prairie pot-hole region (m.ob.), the most southerly birds were singles near the Missouri R in *Mills* and *Fremont* in southwestern Iowa (eBird).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Other than 5 on 26 Jun near Cincinnati *Appanoose* (eBird), all reports were of one or 2 at Dan Greene Sl *Clay*, Lizard L *Pocahontas*, Harrier M *Boone*, Red Rock Res *Marion*, South Twin L *Calhoun*, and in *Pottawattamie* (LAS, RAV, eBird).

**Orchard Oriole:** This low density but widely distributed species was reported from almost half of Iowa's counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 11 on 2 Jun at De Soto NWR *Harrison* (eBird).

## COMMENT

I received a total of 1533 reports on the IOU website, about 950 more sent to me directly, and about 22,300 eBird reports, the most material I have ever had. These reports provide the raw data that are the basis for this article. Besides the 51 individuals listed below and others named individually in the article, hundreds of others provided eBird reports. I extend my sincerest thanks to all of you. Thanks also to Ann Johnson, who made the eBird reports available to me.

A total of 164 species are covered in this report and another 61 species were either reported to the IOU website, to me personally, or to eBird, making a total of 225 species found in Iowa this summer. This is more than the 211 found last summer and the average of 220 over the past five years. The 164 species included in the report is considerably more than the 150 included last year. The average for summers 2012-2016 is 161 species. A number of species that usually are found somewhere in Iowa during summer were not reported this year including Ruddy Turnstone, White-winged Dove, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, and Bewick's Wren.

Most readers of this report will notice that the order in which various species groups appear in the report has changed drastically. Doves and pigeons right after the grouse? House sparrows and finches not at the end of the list? The ornithological experts who study such things have decided that the relationships among many of the orders of birds

and the families within some of the orders are different from what has been long accepted. Hence they have made drastic changes in the sequence in which those groups appear in this list. More changes have been made to the arrangement of the orders of birds than at any time previously in my 50 plus years of noting such things. Despite these changes, the relationships among the species within those groups has had little change except among the shorebirds.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Danny Akers	DAK	Ankeny	Thomas Johnson	TNJ	Centerville
Pam Allen	PHA	West Des Moines	Joe D. Junger	JDJ	Hospers
Reid Allen	RIA	West Des Moines	Matthew C. Kenne	MCK	Algona
Sharon Bauer	SB	Winterset	Darwin Koenig	DK	Ankeny
Neil Bernstein	NB	Cedar Rapids	Betty V. Lucas	BVL	Mason City
Dick Bierman	DBi	Cherokee	Kelly J. McKay	KJM	Hampton, IL
John Bissell	JB	Grimes	Jacob Newton	JN	Ottosen
Elizabeth Blessington	EB	Breda	Wolf Oesterreich	WO	Ames
Aaron Brees	AB	Polk City	Diana Pesek	DP	Cedar Rapids
Mark Brown	MHB	North Liberty	Diane Porter	DCP	Fairfield
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Carolyn Fischer	CJF	Mason City	Paul Skrade	PDBS	Decorah
Jim Forde	JF	Cedar Rapids	Dennis Thompson	DTh	Johnston
James L. Fuller	JLF	Iowa City	Rachel Vanausdall	RAV	Ames
Rita Goranson	RG	Mason City	Karen Vista-Sparkman	KVS	Des Moines
Stephen B. Hager	SBH	Rock Island, IL	Gerald Von Ehwegen	GLV	Sioux City
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# Reassessment of a Scarlet Tanager from Spillville, Iowa: Was it really a tanager?

Ted Floyd

The great Czech composer Antonín Dvorak (1841–1904) resided in Spillville, Winnebago County, Iowa, during the summer of 1893. Dvorak and his family arrived in June, and the composer immediately got down to business. By the end of the month, he had composed and premiered his “American” Quartet (the string quartet in F major, Op. 96), one of the most popular and critically acclaimed works of chamber music of all time.

The American Quartet is of particular interest to birders and ornithologists because of its quotation of a Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) in measures 21–24 of the third movement (Figure 1). To my eyes and ears, this does not seem to be the song of a Scarlet Tanager. The musical quotation, played by the first violin, is high and sweet, a rapid series of irregular phrases interrupted by short rests.

Felicitously, Dvorak’s amanuensis, Josef Kovalík, transcribed the song of the actual bird quoted in the American Quartet (Hefling 2003), and Kovalík’s transcription (Figure 2) looks and sounds even less like the song of a Scarlet Tanager: a fast two-note phrase, followed by a pause; then a fast three-note phrase, followed by a pause; then the two-note phrase again and a pause; and then a new three-note phrase and a pause. The musical phrases, whether they are two notes or three notes, are one beat to the measure; the rests are two beats to the measure. In other words, the pauses are twice as long as the phrases.

The transcription suggests to me the song of the Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*). And listening to measures 21–24 of the American Quartet’s third movement recalls the experience of hearing the vireo. The song of the Red-eyed Vireo is high, sweet, and herky-jerky. It is also exceedingly varied, but a recurring pattern involves alternating two-note and three-note phrases. Cimprich et al. (2000), in their account in *Birds of North America*, render it *cherr-o-wit, cheree, sissy-a-wit, tee-oo*; Dunne (2006), in his *Essential Field Guide Companion*, transcribes the song as *Here I am. See me? I’m up here. In the tree*. And the transcription in my field guide (Floyd 2008) is *chuwee? chuawee! cheerily? churro!*



Figure 1. String Quartet in F major (“American”) by Antonín Dvorak: third movement (molto vivace), measures 21–24, first violin. From Wikimedia Commons ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24](http://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24)).



Figure 2. Transcription of the song of a bird the composer believed to be a Scarlet Tanager. Note the alternating, rising and falling, two-note and three-note phrases, interrupted by rests twice the duration of the phrases. From Wikimedia Commons ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24](http://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24)).

A Red-eyed Vireo recorded in Boulder County, Colorado (DeFonso 2016), is illustrative. The bird's run-on song is characteristically varied, but two-note and three-note phrases are dominant, and there are at least five runs of the two–three–two–three sequence, the first at 0:38 (Figure 3), and others at 0:48, 1:02, 1:38, and 1:45. Compare these with an online recording of the third movement of the American Quartet ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-96-iii](http://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-96-iii)), starting at the 0:14 mark.

A more objective approach is to compare a sound spectrogram of the bird (Figure 3) with the Kovalik transcription of the bird from Spillville (Figure 1). In both, note the up-and-down phrasing, the duration of the pauses, and the sonority or “timbre” (compare the smooth traces of the vireo’s song with pure-tone higher registers of the violin).

The song of the Scarlet Tanager is different. It is commonly described as hoarse or harsh, and the phrasing is faster, with the “rests” as short as or shorter than the song elements. The overall effect is of a less herky-jerky, more continuous delivery. The sound spectrogram of a bird recorded in Franklin County, Tennessee (Parrish 2016) is typical. Note especially the strong modulation (the waviness, which causes a rough burry sound unlike a violin’s), the relatively short pauses (“rests”), and the relatively small pitch changes within each phrase (Figure 4). This tanager’s song neither looks (spectrographically) nor sounds (aurally) like the bird in Dvorak’s American Quartet.

Why might Dvorak have mistaken the song of the Red-eyed Vireo for that of the distantly related Scarlet Tanager? They sound dissimilar. And the birds look utterly different: the midsize, refulgent tanager looks nothing like the smaller, drab vireo.

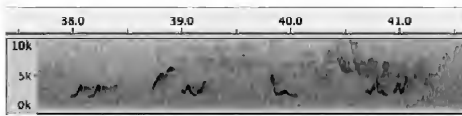


Figure 3. Sound spectrogram (frequency in kilohertz, vertical axis; time in seconds, horizontal axis) of a singing Red-eyed Vireo, Boulder County, Colorado, June 9, 2015. Compare with sequences beginning at 0:48, 1:02, 1:38, and 1:45. Reproduced with permission ([xeno-canto.org/253544](http://xeno-canto.org/253544)).

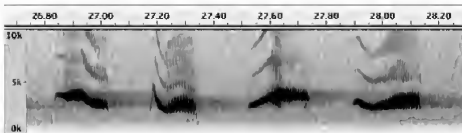


Figure 4. Sound spectrogram (frequency in kilohertz, vertical axis; time in seconds, horizontal axis) of a singing Scarlet Tanager, Franklin County, Tennessee, May 5, 2008. Reproduced with permission ([xeno-canto.org/20432](http://xeno-canto.org/20432)).

Dvorak wasn’t a birder, at least not in the modern sense. He lacked the modern optical equipment and other resources of the 21st Century birder. He had just arrived in Iowa, and unquestionably would have been distracted by tending to his large family and composing one of the most famous string quartets of all time. He heard an “annoying” and “incessant” bird song (see Hefling 2003), asked a local about it, and that, presumably, was that.

There’s something else. The tanager and the vireo occur together in dense foliage in the treetops, and can be impressively hard to see. Skilled birders frequently comment on how difficult it can be to spot a male tanager (let alone the dull vireo), even when the bird is singing loudly. Moreover, the abundant vireo is notorious for singing all day long and all summer long. Dvorak or any other listener probably would have heard far more vireo song than tanager song

in Spillville. Spillville is located in a section of Iowa known for its extensive deciduous forests. At the time of the composer's visit, both Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager were considered common summer residents in such habitat throughout Iowa (Anderson 1907). It is entirely plausible that Dvorak's informant simply got the two species mixed up. And it is frankly *implausible* that Dvorak would have been able to learn the birds of Iowa in a matter of just a few days, especially in light of everything that was going on in the life of the homesick composer.

The bird quoted in measures 21–24 of the third movement of the American Quartet sounds like a Red-eyed Vireo. The composer's transcription eerily matches the sound spectrogram of the species. And even though Dvorak couldn't have had more than a few days' experience with the Red-eyed Vireo, he evidently latched onto the *je ne sais quois* of the species: its “annoying” and “incessant” song.

Dvorak's American Quartet is inarguably great. But it's perhaps not as “American” as one might think. Scholars have been unable to find any real evidence for the African American and Native American musical idioms commonly thought to pervade the work. “American folk tunes,” whatever those might be, are likewise difficult to pin down in this quartet. And a reference in the last movement to a steam locomotive (Dvorak loved trains) is probably more in the mind of the hearer than in the actual score. At least there's an American bird in the American Quartet!

It's just not the species the composer thought it was.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life

James J. Dinsmore

Editor Petersen apparently didn't receive much material for the journal, leading to a rather slim, 16-page December 1966 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. The lead article was a memorial to long-time member and one-time I.O.U. President Myrle Jones. Jones grew up in rural Keokuk County and became a teacher, serving in several Iowa schools. In 1938 he was hired as a Park Naturalist for the Iowa Conservation Commission, first at Ledges State Park and later at Waubonsie, Fort Defiance, finally Bellevue state parks before retiring in 1965 and moving to Arkansas where he died in 1966. He was well-known to I.O.U. members, being a regular at their meetings and often serving the organizations in a variety of ways. He had numerous natural history collections and banded birds for many years.

The field reports for fall 1966 generally had little of any special interest. The fall migration seems to have been fairly decent for various groups of birds but none seemed to have been either exceptionally good or poor. Likewise, there were few reports of unusual species. A Double-crested Cormorant on a nest with young birds in mid-August, apparently at Coralville Reservoir, seemed late. Other interesting finds included two Little Blue Herons in southern Iowa, a Bewick's Wren in Johnson County, and a Red Crossbill in August and several in September.

The most interesting short note described a Parasitic Jaeger that Barton Sutter found in early September 1966 at Rice Lake in Winnebago County. A short note by the editor described the beginnings of the federal Breeding Bird Survey, noting that more than 600 routes were run east of the Mississippi River in the summer of 1966 and that the program would be expanded to include routes west of the Mississippi River in 1967. The program has grown so that now about 2900 routes are run yearly including about 30 in Iowa. Although the methodology is not the best, it has provided some of the most useful and often cited data documenting changes in North American bird populations for the past 50 years.

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